George U. Watson
Warren, Ill.

48545 words

Thrill of the Wild.

I.

Down & Out.

"The wilderness for me!"

So spoke a disheartened man as he entered the kitchen of his home where his wife was busily engaged preparing the evening meal.

"I presume that you have let some shark skin you again," said the wife with an angry frown.

"It has not exactly come to that yet," was the reply, "but that investment Skelton persuaded me to make has turned out badly and we haven't much left, or won't have by the time we get things evened up."

"That's it; you let every gabby schemer that comes along pull the wool over your eyes!" exclaimed the wife scornfully. "I don't know what we are coming to anyway. A family of six and the fellow that poses as the head of the family such a softie that any schemer can rob him. I declare!" she continued.

"I am badly mistaken if you did not advise me to deal with him," said the husband, exasperated. "I know that I have made a number of unfortunate moves but I am very thankful to be able to say that I never lost any of my wife's money," he continued triumphantly, "a very broad smile overspreading his countenance.

"Good reason why," snapped the woman, "I never had any, but it seems as though you have almost managed to lose *That*," she continued tauntingly.

"Those that have must lose", quoth the man. "And it does almost seem as though the person who has nothing will *lose* *it*, sometimes. You used to make believe that you thought me hard to beat."

"Well," admitted the woman, "I did once believe that you could not be beaten, but now I am sure that any *thing* can beat you out of your last dollar. I almost wish that I were back behind the counter once more. A person so situated can see and enjoy nice things even though they cannot possess them."

"Would you wish to blot from existence just one of our dear children that you might have passed these years at the beck and call of the public, even with the sight of nice things thrown in;" asked ~~said~~ the husband reproachfully.

"No, no," said the wife hastily. "Nor could I give you up either. Everything seems to go against us and I feel so blue that I don't know how to behave myself. It relieves me to wag my tongue and scold, just a little. How much will we have left?"

"A few hundred dollars. A very few. And things are in such a shape that I cannot maintain my place in the firm, It is down and out. That is all. I have stuck in that old office until my health is very poor, and my lungs are weak anyhow."

"I am inclined to believe that you are glad to quit", said the woman reproachfully. "How are we to live? You can't work as a day laborer. And the children are not old enough, hardly, to be any help. John is fifteen but he should be in school for a while longer. Mamie is twelve but ~~none~~ not one of my girls shall be knocked about at the whim of every Tom, Dick and Harry, or their female prototypes either if I can help it. No

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girl is safe away from her mother's care".

"Don't think for one minute that a boy is safe," exclaimed the husband. "If you only knew how many temptations, and in such alluring guises, too, come to the boy, you would never rest until you got your children far from a city. Why, John tells me 'most everything, and he has been advised by different ones to chew tobacco, to smoke, steal, gamble, pick pockets, swear, visit houses of ill-repute, and, well, I cant think of all just now. If you knew the temptations assailing the boys and men of a city, you would wonder how it is that so many of them are good;

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reliable citizens."

Have you any plans for the future?" asked the wife after a few moments of thoughtful silence.

"Only this; I have thought the matter over and would like to get as far from a thickly populated district as possible. As near as I can find out, there is big money in sheep and not much hard labor. I would like to find some little known locality and homestead a quarter section and begin life over again where I can have a better chance to train my children according to my own ideas. A fellow away from his family all day long has slim chance of keeping the in-

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fluence of the vicious idler from outweighing his in the makeup of his children's character."

"Have you any locality in view?" asked the wife.

"I thought that Arizona would be a good place, I notice that by the government statistics the population is quite sparse and I am sure that there must be some good locations not taken."

"Arizona! That is a long ways off. We may never get back if we once get there. I understand that Arizona is little better than a desert."

"Some that way, I guess," said the man. "But there are mountains, rivers

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and some forests. I understand that there are a good many sheep and cattle on the ranges now — just run wild. I thought that we might find some mountain valley where there was a small stream and that we could irrigate such crops as we might need. Judging from its length, I should think that the Little Colorado must be nearly as large as the Hudson river. Or, making allowance for a dry country, quite a respectable stream at any rate.

"I am sure that you will not need to take a steamboat along when you go to Arizona," said the wife banteringly. "You probably won't even need rubber boots to keep your feet dry when you cross the Little Colorado in summer time."

"We surely will not find so many sharpers there. They say that the cowboys and cattle men are very kind and liberal to every one. As sure as my name is John Levins, I am sick and tired of this eternal turmoil without any gain. We surely can't do worse there than here. Will you go?"

Mrs. Levins hesitated for a full minute before she replied. Then she said; "Oh, yes, I suppose that I might just as well agree with your plans. It seems like we are out here and we will probably be able to get enough to eat and wear anyway. I fear that you will find people there ready to overreach such an easy-going person as yourself. Here come the children. Let us see what Mamie and

John have to say. "John," she continued as the older children entered the room. "Would you like to go to Arizona?"

"Yes; if the whole family goes. I wouldn't like to go alone and leave you behind."

"We, your father and I, are talking about moving out there. Your father thinks that it would be better for his health, and that there isn't much danger of doing any worse there than we are doing here."

"Of course I'll go and glad of the chance," said John Jr. (commonly known as Jack) heartily.

"How about you, Mamie?" asked the mother. "Will you go or will you stay?"

"Go, of course," said Mamie with a smile.

"Where's mama goin'?" demanded seven year old Ralph as he burst into the room with a noisy rush closely followed by nine year old Jennie.

"To the moon," declared the elder brother with an exagerated wink.

"No she aint," declared Ralph. I know how much good your say so is. I'm goin' 'long anyhow. Where you goin', mama?"

"With papa and mama. To Arizona, maybe."

"What's you goin' to take?" Can I take Fido an' my rocking horse, an' my airgun, an' my swing, an' my bat, an' my play house an'—"

"We can take little but our clothing and our bedding," interrupted Mrs. Levins. "Fido can go and you can take your airgun, but the other things will have to be left behind.

"What is there in Arizona?" asked Jennie. "Can we take some chairs?" she continued without waiting for an answer to her first question.

"We will need to do without chairs. I cant begin to tell you all there is in Arizona. Jack rabbits, foxes, cottontails, deer, antelope, indians, cowboys, soldiers, cactus, and lots of other things."

"You will have to sit on your thumb when you get there", declared Jack with a comic distortion of his countenance.

"Huh! I'll set on a-a-a cactus for all you," said Ralph scornfully, "You think that you are smart, but you aint."

"I have an idea that you won't 'set' for long," said Mrs. Levins with a smile.

"What are we to do with our house?" she continued

"Sell it," explained Mr. Levins apologetically. "It will take every thing besides and a part of its value to pay our debts.

"Burn all bridges and no retreat," said Mrs. Levins half to herself.

"I can't help it," said the husband ~~st~~ dolefully, "We will have to pay our debts so long as we have anything to pay with."

"Say!" shouted Ralph, "I've got fifty seven cents. You can have that if you are hard up."

"Thank you, my boy. Hang

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right to it and it may come handy some time," said Mr. Levins with a grave smile.

"I've got most two dollars," declared Jimmie. "You can have that any time you need it."

"I've got eleven dollars and nineteen cents," declared Mamie. "You are welcome to that, I am sure."

"Say Jack, how much you got?" demanded Ralph, taking advantage of a momentary pause.

"Let me see," began Jack sheepishly. "I guess I'll have to count before I can tell," he continued as he drew his pocket book forth from his trousers pocket. A hush fell upon the family as the very selfconscious elder son slowly counted the contents of the purse.

"All of one dollar and fifty one cents," he announced with a sickly grin.

"We beat you," chorused the girls.

"What you been doin"? demanded Ralph scornfully

"You can't expect a young man to save much in this gay old town," declared Jack. "It seems like a fellow could spend a hundred dollars a week, if he could only get hold of it."

"Huh! If they call such fellers as you young men, I'd like to know where they find the kids", said Master Ralph with energy,

"Never mind, children," interrupted Mr. Lewis. "You will be quarreling next and we can't have that. Let us have supper and then maybe we will discuss our plans for the future some more."

"Will you advertise our house?" asked Mrs. Levins.

"No," replied Mr. Levins. "I have some friends who wish to buy and I will see them to-morrow. I think that they will give more for the house and lot than strangers.

"So there are some in this city who will not gouge you?" asked Mrs. Levins with a smile.

"Yes; there are some. A great many; but there are plenty of schemers."

II.

Westward Ho

"Say pa," demanded Master Ralph. "Aint we ever going to get there?"

"Sure," replied the father. "It will take about four days of travel yet, maybe a little more. This is the only the beginning of the second day. Are you getting tired?"

"No," replied the youngster. "I like this, but I thought that we would get pretty near to the Pacific ocean by night, an' you said that we would stop before we got to the ocean."

"Say, Ralph," began Jack in a matter-of-fact way. "We'll never stop for any ocean. We will just run and jump right in, and swim across."

"Huh!" exclaimed Ralph.

If I didn't know any more'n you do, I'd keep my mouth shut."

And it was on and on with almost ceasless rattle and clang until Chicago was reached. Past fields, mines, meadows, villages, towns, cities, ~~and over~~ rivulets, creeks and rivers until the eye wearied of the fast fleeting panorama.

At Chicago the family took a layoff of two days to take in the sights of the city. Ralph's sharp tongue found a chance to wag effectively upon more than one occasion, but his hottest shot was made when an undersized, effeminate appearing, but much conceited young man, entered the street car in which the Levins family were and accosting Master Ralph said; "Say kid, crowd over a little and give a man a

~~man~~ a little room, can't you."

"Huh!" exclaimed Ralph, exasperated by being crowded into such close quarters. "If they call such fellers as you men in this country the boys must be a scruffy looking crowd." Whereupon Mamie giggled, Jessie laughed outright and Jack ventured the remark: "Ralph is going to be a cowboy."

"That is what I call corn," said Mr. Levins, pointing out of the car window at a field of corn showing its golden wealth in the autumn ~~shun~~ sunshine. "These Illinois people have a fine country. If we could only locate here! A man with a farm in this section is certainly well fixed."

"Why not stop?" demanded Ralph.

"Oh, we have our tickets for Arizona now, and besides, we could not buy enough of this land with the money that we have to give Fido a licking on when he steals our shoes."

"Say, papa, said Jennie. "Will we get a chance to see the Father of waters?"

"I fear not, girlie. It will be night before we reach it."

"What is the Father of Waters?" asked Ralph.

"The Mississippi river," replied Mr. Levins.

"What is it called that for?" queried Ralph.

"Because it has so many kid rivers to feed," broke in Jack.

"You are wrong," said Mamie. This is an instance in which the youngsters do the feeding."

"I stand corrected," said Jack.

"No you don't," declared the literal-minded Ralph much puzzled. "You are a sittin' down. Now stop your foolin' and tell me why the Mississippi river is called the "Father of Waters"."

"Because," said Mrs. Lewis, "it is so large and important. For instance, your father is much larger than you are."

"Why is pa larger than I am," demanded the small boy

"Oh," said the mother with a sigh. "He has had a chance to grow longer than you. He ~~is~~ is older."

"Yes, I can see that pa is longer than I am. Will I be long when I am old?"

"Very likely, my son," replied the mother resignedly. "It often happens that way."

"Is the Mississippi river longer than the other rivers?" asked the inquisitive Ralph.

"Yes," was the brief response.

"Is the Mississippi river older than the other rivers?" was the next question.

"I hardly know," said the mother, noting that a number of nearby persons were smiling broadly.

"Say, pa," exclaimed Ralph after a short pause. "Are you important?"

"Not very, I fear," admitted Mr. Levins.

"You're big and you are long an' you are not very important," ventured the knowledge seeking Ralph after a considerable pause during which he considered the fitness of things in the light of his new found wisdom. "It seems like you ought not to be boss over us children."

"Oh, that part is all right," said Mr. Levins. "You need some one to keep you straight. It seems like I am the only one grown enough to try to help your mother look after you," he continued banteringly.

"Say pa," protested Ralph soberly. "I don't believe that I'd be healthy were I any straighter than I am now. Say, pa," he continued after a thoughtful pause, "When will you get ripe?"

"I can't just tell you that. Better keep still now. These people are all listening."

"Don't care if they do," declared Ralph stoutly. "I didn't tell 'em to."

And after a thoughtful pause he inquired: "Say pa, maybe if you would just go away ma could find some one big and important, what's got lots of money, to help take care of us children."

A burst of laughter greeted this remark and the offended Ralph subsided into a silence that was not broken for many a mile.

Only the reflection of the stars on the surface of the water indicated the location of the Mississippi river as the cars crossed the bridge and the emigrants could not enjoy the sight of that mighty stream of water.

The route through the State of Missouri lay through a productive, prosperous section. A steamboat on the Missouri river claimed the children's attention as long as it was in sight. Ralph wanted to know if there would be one in Arizona.

The family was detained for more than an hour in the big depot on the "Flats" and Jack and Ralph explored the building and vicinity pretty thoroughly in that time — even to reading the names on the doors of the offices along the corridors leading to the viaduct.

The man with the megaphone, as he announced the departure of the trains claimed Ralph's attention most. Sidling up to his mother he said: "Say ma, don't you think I need one of those horns to talk through?"

"No, my son," she replied. "I am sure that you do not." But her meaning was lost upon the youngster and he continued: "Where did all of these people come from?"

"I don't know," was the answer.

"What are they waiting for?" was the next question.

"The right train, I suppose," was the weary answer.

"Where are they going?" was Ralph's next.

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Who is that man with the horn?" was the next question.

"I don't know," was the mother's weary reply.

"Huh!" was Ralph's disgusted exclamation. "I wish that I had a ma what knew things. It makes a feller feel bad to ~~kn~~ want to know things and can't find out."

"The emigrants left Kansas city by way of the Santa Fe railroad, passing up the valley of the Kaw river, through Lawrence, past Topeka, and getting glimpses of much fine farming land.

The train newsboy, probably taking them for a green crowd, attempted in ~~his~~ the usual persistent, overbearing way of his kind, to sell them a "Tourists Pacific Guide". Beginning with one dollar and twenty five cents, "and cheap at that," he loquaciously praised the good points of the book. Finding that a firm refusal was the reward of his oratory, he offered the book for one dollar, then seventy five cents. Finding that even that price combined with his best efforts failed to effect a sale, he dropped to sixty cents, and finally to fifty. But the Levins family knew how to say no, and he turned away as if in anger and left them.

"Say mister," called Jack in as matter-of-fact and sympathetic a tone as he could command; "I'll take your book - if you will *give* me a dollar."

Although apparently much offended, Mr. Newsboy ~~sho~~ soon showed up again. This time he wanted to exchange small bills for a large one.

"So that the money would be easier to send home," he said.

"I have no bills to exchange," declared Mr. Levine, which, although he had bills of various denominations, was the truth.

"What is the matter with you anyway!" exclaimed the newsboy in high temper. "You aren't a bit accommodating."

"Oh shame," said Mrs. Levine after the newsboy had departed.

"couldn't you do that much for the poor fellow?"

"I have been played for a sucker a great many times," was the answer, "but I don't bite at green bait."

"What do you mean?" inquired Mrs. Levins.

"Those bills are very likely counterfeit and I hardly need anything of that stamp on my hands. This is the second time since I left home that odd chickens have tried to get me to trade a large bill for small ones."

"When daylight appeared the next morning, the travellers found that they were passing through a strange, desert-like country. The grass was short and scant, and as a general thing, weeds of a peculiar appearance were about all that could be seen. The Kansas-Colorado line was crossed early in the forenoon and soon afterward they beheld the first irrigating ditch. Some dead cattle were scattered about the plains between the State line and La Junta and the soil had a forlorn ash-like appearance.

Beyond La Junta, cactus, sand, dead horses and cattle, and bare alkali elevations varying from fifteen to perhaps fifty feet in height were the chief objects of interest.

Dwarf pinon cedars grew on the more elevated ground near at hand. Far off in the west, snow-covered mountain tops showed, and on the open plains near at hand, droves of horses browsed upon the short, scant, curly-looking grass.

At Hoene, our travelers obtained their first view of adobe houses.

Dwarf evergreens, lonesome looking and forlorn, crowned the heights beyond Hoene and a thin layer of coal cropped out of the side of the railroad cut before the State Line Tunnel was reached.

"We are getting heavier," declared Jack jocosely after peeping out of the car window.

"Are we?" asked Jennie in surprise. "I don't see how that can be."

"At any rate," declared Jack, "they have hitched on another engine in front. So, you see, it looks like something is the matter. Say folks, but this is a wild-looking old country," he continued. "I hope that Arizona will be able to show up something better than this.

Ralph, O Ralph! as sure as I am sitting here, those engines up there in front are turning about and are coming back to see us."

"Only a sharp curve", said Mr. Levins, as Mrs. Levins looked up in surprise.

"I wouldn't be surprised," Jack continued for Ralph's benefit, "if this old train grabbed its tail in its mouth and rolled up over the mountain."

"Huh!" said Ralph petulantly. "I wish you'd talk sense. You are the worst old brother I've got.

"You"— with rattle and clang, the cars entered the tunnel and Ralph stopped short in stupefied amazement.

"Say pa," demanded Ralph when the cars had emerged from the tunnel, "can the folks out here have night come any time they want it?"

"No, my son," was the reply. "That was a tunnel. This tunnel is a passage under a mountain for the cars to run through."

"Seems like we were in there most an hour," declared Ralph in awe struck tones. "I'm mighty glad we got out."

"If I had only had my best girl along!" said Jack apparently to himself, but loud enough for the rest of the family to hear.

"A best girl would get tired of you mighty soon," declared Ralph.

Beyond the tunnel, Raton

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appeared to view. Raton is a considerable town, city some people call it, nestled among mountain tops at an altitude of nearly seven thousand feet above sea level. The Tunnel is about one thousand feet higher.

Raton, with its car shops and "Employee's Reading Rooms", presented an appearance more like the towns of the East, except for the scenery and a sort of a sun-down, dilapidated air, than almost any that they had seen since the Kansas-Colorado line had been crossed. The entire family watched eagerly out of the car window to catch a glimpse of as many of the sights as possible.

Glorietta was another elevated town, (about seven thousand four hundred feet above sea level)

Our Travelers reached Albuquerque

at an early hour in the morning, about half past one, and through unfortunate railroad mishaps were compelled to wait until the following evening before an A. & P. train whirled them away from what seemed to be a nice little town. They, however, whiled away the hours by exploring the town, viewing the scenery, especially the great mountain which seemingly reared its immense bulk into the sky a few miles away.

"Papa," said Jack, grinning broadly. "What time is it?"

"Just five minutes past three," said Mr. Lewis looking at his watch.

"That watch must run when you do," said Jack.

"Jack has one of his

funny spells again," remarked Mamie

"What is troubling you now," asked Mr. Levins.

"The depot clock says that it is three minutes past two," declared Jack. "You and your old watch must be turned around a little in this funny looking country."

"I can't see how that comes," said the Father. "There is no better time keeper than this watch This time must be right."

"It would be back in chicago where you set it," said Jack Here it would make a fellow get up early for his breakfast."

"Oh, this is Mountain Time!" exclaimed Mr. Levins. And he added: "I am really pleased to know that I have such a bright son."

clouds made their appearance while our friends were at Albuquerque and it was raining before they had gone far. At Gallup, the ground was covered with snow. The family was much interested in Pueblo indians that came through the car trying to sell fruit when the train stopped at some small station. The children were rather afraid of a gang of Mexicans that boarded the car at a point farther back, one of whom was boisterous and appropriated some fruit without paying for the same.

Daylight the next morning disclosed to view a water-soaked, reddish soil, nearly barren of vegetation, and about as dreary and desert-like as could be imagined.

"What a God-forsaken

country!" exclaimed Mrs. Levin. "Could anything be worse!"

"There's lots of Jack rabbits anyway," said Jack. "I havent seen so many anywhere as there are here." Just see them scamper away from the cars!"

"Then I guess God must be around somewhere," was Ralph's sage remark.

"Holbrook," called the brakeman.

"Here is where we get off," said Jack.

"I am about ready to quit riding," was Ralphs remark.

The other members of the family said nothing, and a rather quiet group filed into the depot building; which was hardly large enough for a decent henhouse back East.

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III.

Getting Acquainted.

Holbrook proved to be a boom town that had lost its boom. It had been a prosperous, bustling village not far from the banks of the Little colorado river in former days, but its greatness was gone. A fire started in some manner in some wool stored in a room in the village had swept the town and now Schuster Brother's store, the Arizona Co-operative Mercantile Institute (a mormon store), Brown and Kinder's livery stable, and a couple of saloons did nearly all the business of the town outside of government affairs. Holbrook handled the mail and freight for Fort Apache, Keen's canon and the mormon towns to the southward.

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"Better go to York's," said the agent in reply to Mr. Levin's query. "I stay there and manage to enjoy myself pretty well. There is another place down on the flat, (indicating the direction by a wave of the hand) but the Old Lady is apt to get on a regular toot most any time and you might not like that."

"I and my elder son will be away most of the time," explained Mr. Levin to the landlord. "What will you charge to keep my wife and three children per month? They may be here two weeks and they may be here a month, or even more."

Mr. Levin asked for rates by the month, thinking that he could be saving a little over rates by the day or week and he was so surprised that he could hardly speak and looked dumbly about him as though in quest of a hole in which to crawl when Landlord Zorke said; "I can let them stay here one month for Seventy Five Dollars, cash in advance. That is a little less than regular rates but there is quite a crowd of you and I long ago gave up the idea of ever getting rich. If you prefer to pay for two weeks in advance, it will be Forty Dollars."

Mrs. Levins compressed her lips until only a faint line showed. Jennie looked scared and unconsciously thrust her hand into her pocket and gripped her purse tightly. Jack, more trained in the way of the world than his sister, pretended to neither see nor hear.

Jennie and Ralph were to buy

getting acquainted with the Landlords daughter, a girl of about fourteen, the possessor of a pair of very large dark eyes, to take notice of passing events.

"That's the way the money goes, pop goes the weasel," hummed Master Jack, opening his eyes very wide and glaring about him in a mock ferocious way as soon as the landlord and his daughter left the room.

"You must hunt fast for a location—a hole to crawl into," said Mrs. Levins.

"Nothing truer," said Mr. Levins gravely. "This is about as bad as Saratoga and Hot Springs without the style. I will have to wait until to-morrow before I begin."

The next forenoon was a busy one for Mr. Levins. The people all seemed ready to aid the homeseekers and were so sociable and frank that Mrs. Levins soon felt much at home.

"We have no sets or cliques here," said one. But before noon Mrs. Levins found that the remark referred principally to the white (Gentile) population. The Gentiles, Mormons, Mexicans, military and each indian tribe very nearly formed, each by itself, a caste. The military, perhaps, is not quite so barbarous a finality.

"Good enough country when you get used to it," said another. "Golden apples don't grow on these cottonwoods though and you can't pick strawberries from these cedars or catch a jackrabbit with any old cur that you happen to have with you. Lots of people make a good living here and I guess that you can do so, ~~too~~ too. You can find plenty of places here in Arizona where your next door neighbor will be forty miles away. Now, there are the Mormons, they seem to get along pretty well."

"How do they manage?" asked Mr. Levins, dim possibilities looming before him.

"Well, to put the matter pretty strong, they live on what they can raise and if they can't raise enough, they just go without. ~~In~~ Queer people, they."

"How are they different from other white people?" asked Mr. Levins.

"Did you ever know any real stuck-in-the-mud, dyed-in-the-wool catholic who could not see how any one but a *good* catholic could ever get to Heaven? Well, that is Mormon, too. Why," continued the Holbrook man, "just ask one of the real ones whether he is a white man or a Mormon and he will say Mormon every time. See that fellow down beyond the A.C.M.I.?

One man, two women and six youngsters! That is Mormon all the way from Show Low, a Mormon town up near the Apache indian reservation. He is down here for some freight and has brought his wives and children along for a pleasure trip."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Mr. Levins. Surely they are not so bold as that."

"Why!" exclaimed the Holbrook man, "the bookkeeper in the

Mormon store there has three, so they say. A United States Deputy Marshall got within fifty feet of him one day, but did not know his man, and Mr. F. managed to take a sudden sneak. No; we don't bother ourselves much here about the wife part of it. As a rule, the Mormons are not bad people. We rather think here that the man who has three or four wives don't need to be sent to the penitentiary to be punished.

"Are there many with plural wives?" asked Mr. Levins.

"I think not," was the reply. "Only the big bugs among them."

"Are there many children among the Mormons?" inquired Mr. Levins.

"*Slathers* of 'em," was the reply.

"But why should there be more children among the Mormons than among the more well-to-do Gentiles?" inquired the puzzled newcomer.

"Oh, it is for the good of the religion with the good of the big-bugs of the religion a close second. The more children, the more Mormons, and the more Mormons the more tithes. It is pretty hard to find a religion that don't work the women ~~overtime~~ over time though. Of course I don't mean to say that we don't need a religion," he continued apologetically, "but I have no use for a creed that would treat my wife or my daughter as inferior creatures not deserving of individual thought or action. If there is any woman that wants to play second fiddle just because she happens to take a pretty strong fancy to some man, I don't know as I shall bother my brains any about the matter; But when she is taught by a fool priesthood that there is no room in Heaven for the woman that isn't hanging on to the coattails of some man, then—well, that religion is to old and stale for my smeller.

"Say," continued the Holbrook man, in a matter-of-fact tone, "You seem to be quite anxious to find out all about the Mormons. Did you want an extra one?"

"No," declared Mr. Levins.

"I have my hands about full now," he continued as he glanced quickly behind him as if expecting a deputy to pounce upon him.

"Don't get scared," said the Holbrook man with a laugh. "You won't be made to take an extra one or two if you keep clear of the Mormons. I hear that you are looking for a place to locate."

"Yes; that was my intention. Do you know much about the country?"

"Quite a bit," was the reply. "You will find some very nice places in this country, but you will be apt to be lonesome, if you are that kind. If you should happen to run across Pleasant Valley, the people there will round you up in short order; but if they find out that you are a tenderfoot, they won't hurt you."

"Why will they round me up," demanded Mr. Lewis.

"Oh, they have done some things that make them suspicious of a stranger," was the reply. "You can't just tell what will happen in this country and most folks are pretty careful to be ready for anything.

"Do people ever really kill each other here," asked Mr. Levins soberly.

"Yes," was the reply. "Not two weeks ago a cowboy got to much booze on board and began to shoot out the lights in one of the saloons. The saloonkeeper told him to stop and he fired at the saloonkeeper, missing him, and almost instantly two forty five calibre bullets passed through his breast, killing him almost instantly."

"And yet people will tolerate such a harmful, useless thing as an alcoholic beverage," remarked Mr. Levins. "It beats me how people will allow themselves to be played for suckers by such schemes as the liquor sellers."

"Oh, some people like to be humbugged," declared the Holbrook man. "And the more unreasonable the graft the more the victim shouts about personal liberty. When would you like to start out exploring?"

"Right away; the sooner the better. Would you mind helping me out."

"Certainly," was the hearty response. "I know quite a bit about the country, and I am getting tired of loafing about here. Not much doing."

"I thought that the town seemed to be pretty dead," said Mr. Levins musingly. "Was it always this way?"

"Not at all," was the emphatic response. "We had a regular old boomed here once. Five Hundred Dollars for a bare lot was no joke, and now you can get some of those same lots for One Dollar each, and perhaps a few thanks thrown in for good measure. A fire was what did up Holbrook".

"How did the fire start?" asked Mr. Levins quickly.

"In some wood stored north of the railroad track.

"Who are those people?" inquired Mr. Levins, indicating a group of indians passing along the street

"Those are Navajo indians. They look a little niggery, some of them, but I guess that that spells Mexican. They are a bum lot bound for Fort Apache to dicker with the Apaches. The squaws weave some very fine blankets and scarfs".

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"Do the indians and Mexicans intermarry," queried Mr. Levins.

"No, not particularly", was the reply. "Mexican women and children have been carried away from their homes as captives by raiding war parties in former times. It is said that there are gold mines in their reservation, but it would not be wise for a white man to go prospecting in that country."

"Shall we go to-morrow?" asked Mr. Levins.

"No," was the reply. "I can't get ready. We will need three saddle horses, if your boy goes along, and a pack horse. Also guns and amunition. Better get a good winchester rifle and some cartridges and I will see to the rest. You will have to have a good gun here," continued the Holbrook man, noting a look of surprise upon Mr. Levin's face. "I know of a nice little nook that will just suit you. I would settle down there myself if it were not so blamed lonesome. We will start day after to-morrow at sunrise. *Savé?*"

"What does that mean?" demanded Mr. Levin.

"*Savé?*" "Oh, that is Arizona for 'do you understand'. I will have to go now, so good bye. Be sure to be ready on time. Don't get *locoed* on some of these ~~Greasers~~ greaser girls running loose around here," added the Holbrook man mischievously as he disappeared around the corner.

IV

A Picnic.

"Let us go down to the river and have a steamboat ride," said Jack in a matter-of-fact tone the next morning as the family were grouped in front of the low hotel building watching a trainload of cattle go rumbling by.

"Huh," grunted Ralph disdainfully, "We have been down there and you couldn't sail a tub on *that* *river* without it getting stuck in the mud. The feller what called that a river couldn't tell a duck from a goose."

"Maybe it is the best that they can afford in their country in the way of a river," remarked Mrs. Levine.

"Let us have a good, old-fashioned picnic," suggested Grannie.

"It would be such fun."

"A picnic, a picnic," shouted Jennie, jumping up and down and clapping her hands. "Please do."

"Yes; I would like to be a nickpicker and pick old nick," remarked Jack in a matter-of-fact way.

"You'll get picked yourself if you don't be a little careful," admonished Ralph as a couple of cowboys with befringed chaps, broad-brimmed sombreros, forty fours, and other cowboy notions went galloping past at a breakneck speed.

"Hum, um yum," drawled Jack. "It is a fine day for a picnic."

"Let us go down by the river," pleaded Jennie. "Maybe we can see some fish."

"Or a whale," chimed in Jack.

"Huh! might as well say an elephant," grumbled Ralph scornfully.

"Down through the scattered cottonwoods, in high spirits, the family took their way until they reached the bank of the Little Colorado

"Where is your river?" asked Mr. Levine with a smile.

"Right there; can't you see?" replied Mr. Levine. You may see a ~~whate~~ whale at least two inches long the next thing you know. Although I doubt if a fish could live in alkali tainted water."

"What are these?" asked Jennie as they came to a place where some one had been making adobe bricks.

"Those must be adobe bricks," said Mr. Levine. "People here make a great many of their houses out of them."

"Bricks!" exclaimed matter-of-fact Ralph. "Aren't those to large for bricks?"

"No, my son. A brick is a brick regardless of size."

"Ralph is a brick re-marked Jack soto voce. "Say people, he continued as earnestly as though he really meant it. "I am going to build my palace out of such things when I get to be a Mormon bishop and have sixteen wives".

"Shuh!" exclaimed Ralph "One wife 'll make you scratch pretty lively."

"Ralph has had so much experience with wives", remarked Jack with a wink.

"I don't see any fun

here," declared Jennie.

"nor I either," said Mamie.

Suppose that we go over to the bluff there—I don't know which way it is. Down and up are about the only directions that I know here. Even the sun does not seem to rise in the right place," she continued.

"come on; I'll show you which way is which," declared Jack as he started off, swinging himself and a jug of cold tea which he carried in a very reckless manner.

"Don't break that jug," commanded Mr. Levins. Whereupon Jack walked with such rigid care that he forgot to look where he placed his feet and tumbled sprawling in the dirt.

On past the stockyards, over the unfenced railroad track, and across a flat plain and to the bluff proceeded the picnicers.

"Let us rest here," suggested Mrs. Levins. The family, excepting Jack, settled themselves on a dry bank of earth and looked about them.

"Brown sandstone," said Mr. Levins.

"I wonder how this country got manufactured," ventured Mamie.

"I must look for signs of bloodthirsty red men," declared Jack in a business like tone as he started away. "It wouldn't do to be taken unawares. I'll find the trail, if there is any about. See if I don't."

"If there are any indians

about, they will scalp you for a green horn," declared Ralph.

"They would take you for a pappoose," retorted Jack with a laugh. "Hello! here is a skunk," he continued and began to pelt it with pebbles. "Oh, the thing is dead!" he exclaimed. "I might as well have saved my muscle.

"It takes a brave warrior to kill a dead skunk," remarked Mrs. Lewis with a smile. Jack did not notice the remark and began peering into crevices in the rock. "I'll just chase myself around here for forty miles or less and if there is any danger, I'll let you know," he called as he disappeared around a pile of rock.

"I do wonder what is coming over Jack," sighed Mrs. Lewis.

"He hasn't seemed like the same boy since we landed in Arizona."

"Mr. Levins, gazing dreamily out across the valley, striving, perhaps, to read the future through the vail which divides the is from that which is to be, gave no heed.

"Ah there," came Jack's voice from somewhere in the distance: "Come quick! I've found it this time, the real thing! No foolin' this time."

"Up jumped Grannie, Jennie and Ralph and rushed away at the top of their speed in the direction from whence came the call while the parents followed more leisurely.

"What is it? Where is it? What you found?" demanded the children in breathless expectation as they came upon Jack standing in a nook of the bluff staring at the face of the brown sandstone rock.

"See," said Jack with a wave of his hand. "Pictures! These are indian picture writings."

"What do they say?" asked Mamie.

"I can't tell you", replied Jack. "I am not up in that kind of bookology. Aren't they clear?"

"Huh," said Ralph disdainfully, glancing at the inartistic, but clearly defined figures. "I could do as well as that myself."

"Could you?" asked Jack as if in surprise. "Let me see you".

"I didn't bring my pencil along," said Ralph.

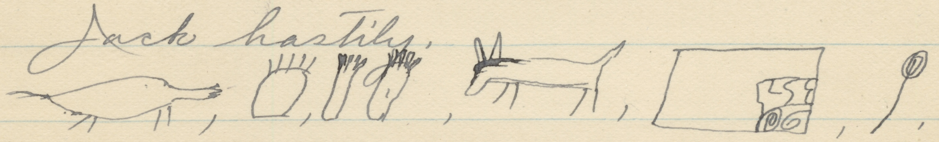
"I would like to know

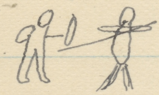
what kind of a pencil did that." said Jack.

"There, papa, mama", called Jennie

"Quite a picture gallery", remarked Mr. Levins as he stood gazing at the pictures. "It looks like the work of some ambitious youngster."

"It wasn't me", declared Jack hastily.





"A turtle, a hand, a pair of feet, two warriors with spears and shields, a club—possibly, a flag—of truce, maybe, and a—what is it anyway? Looks like it might be a likeness of a jackrabbit or a donkey. There are some other things.

Quite an interesting collection, and might be more interesting if we knew what they signified, and when and by whom etched upon that rock".

"Say, ladies and gentlemen," began Jack. "Let us not idle away so many precious moments. Let us be up and going, Still achieving, still pursuing, always finding something new. I would like to climb up on top here and see what can be found. I've viewed the artistic handiwork of the noble red man until I would like to view something else."

"All right," said Mr. Levins. "You show us a good place to get up and away we will go."

"Here goes," shouted Jack as he started off with a push. "Whew," he exclaimed and stopped suddenly as a jackrabbit sprang from its lair

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and raced away with long, awkward leaps, "If my running gear was of as much use to me as that old fellow's, pound for pound, I just believe that I could get over the ground at the rate of about forty miles a minute."

"Whew!" exclaimed Mr. Levins reprovingly.

"Well I do think so sure," declared Jack stoutly. Seems like had my parents been brought up racers, I could be able to keep in sight of a jack rabbit, anyway. Seems like my muscle isn't properly developed in the right place."

"I fear that is true," said Mr. Levins gravely. The muscle about the roots of your tongue has been developed at the expense of the rest of your body. It is hardly wise to talk to loud or to much."

"I guess that my muscle isn't in the right place either", sighed Mrs. Levins as, with the assistance of Jack and his father, she gained the top of the plain overlooking the valley of the Little Colorado.

Near by, nestled among the scattered cottonwoods, was Holbrook. Far away to the southeast, the bald top of Woodruff Butte ~~show~~ reared its dark crown. To the West and Northwest, a cedar fringe placed ~~to~~ a limit to the vision.

"Oh, a grasshopper!", exclaimed Jennie as the family proceeded to the northeastward across the plain.

"A grasshopper in December!" exclaimed Mrs. Levins incredulously.

"Sure," declared Jack as he stooped to view Jennie's find, "We don't live in Blizzard's land these days."

"A brown, wingless, short-legged hopper," said Mr. Levins as he stood looking at the stupid, feebly-struggling thing. "Don't hardly look like there is grass enough around here to raise hoppers," he continued as he glanced about.

"What in the world is this?" asked Ralph from a distance. It looks like a rock, but is made like a tree," he continued as the rest of the family drew near.

"Of course that is a rock," declared Jack knowingly. "Couldn't be anything else."

How did it get into such a shape?" demanded Ralph much puzzled.

"That is petrified wood"; said Mr. Levins. "That has been a tree some time, but turned to stone."

"I wouldn't wonder, I wouldn't wonder," remarked Jack

"How long is the thing? I'll find out." Jack stepped briskly alongside the prostrate trunk as it lay half buried in the earth. "One hundred and twenty feet," he called.

"And it is more than three feet across the top where it has been broken off. It is good nine feet across the butt."

"What became of the top?" demanded Ralph.

"can't tell you," was Jack's laconic reply. "I am sure that the top disappeared long before I discovered Arizona."

"What broke the top off," was Ralph's next question.

"I am sure that I didn't," was Jack's humble disclaimer.

"Say pa, what makes wood turn to stone?" was Ralph's next.

"That is rather beyond my knowledge," was the reply. "Salt water may have had something to do with it, but I don't know."

"I guess that Ralph has found a new supply of interrogation points," said Mamie.

"Huh!" grumbled Ralph. Tisn't any sin to want to know something. "I wonder what kind of a tree that was," he continued wistfully.

"Judging from its size, it may have been a relative of the Big Trees of California, but why it should turn to a yellowish, or dirty white is more than I can tell.

There must have been a great forest here once when this part of the earth was nearer sea-level. Holbrook is about five thousand feet above sea-level now; but there was once a great sea or ocean here.

"How do you know," queried Ralph doubtingly.

"These round, smooth pebbles were surely made so by the action of water," was the father's reply. "This sand is another proof. I believe that these petrified trees are another, also. It seems that once upon a time, there was a rich land with a moist, warm climate here, and in later ages this same land became the bed of an ocean; and again in later ages, this region was upheaved by natural forces and became as it is now, almost a barren waste."

"How long ago was that?" asked Ralph

"You will need to ask something easier than that," said Mr. Levins with a smile. "I am not equal to the emergency." And then Ralph sighed.

"Once I was young and lively,
Now I am broken, old,
But as sure as the sun shines above us,
That wood will never burn," sang Jack.

"Where did you find that?" asked Mamie sweetly.

"Oh, I just manufactured that," declared Jack. "Wasn't that great? I believe that I will turn poet. I expect that I might as well start growing a beard and a fine head of hair," he continued musingly. "Of course I'll have to have all of the fixin'," he continued half apologetically as he noticed that his parents were smiling. "Besides, I understand that the ladies just ~~rune~~ run after a poet.

"Huh!" grunted Ralph in disdain. They'd run after you with a club!"

"I fear that you will find poetry a not very renumerative article", remarked Mrs. Levins.

"Well then, it will just fit this country," said Jack heartily.

"Just see what I have found," shouted Jennie excitedly, dancing up to the group. "See," she continued as she opened her hand and disclosed to view tiny bright-colored pebbles. Some were round and some were irregular in shape. "Maybe they are diamonds," she continued hopefully, "and we can be rich."

"No, girlie," said Mr. Levin kindly. Those are worthless, except to look at. Where did you find them?"

"Over there in that little ant hill," was the reply.

"The ants probably brought them up from underground," said Mr. Levin.

"Who are those people?" asked Ralph pointing off to the northwest where two horsemen were riding down a small valley.

"cowboys," probably," was the ~~answer~~ answer.

"Ich to pe ine cowpoy
Und mit der cowpoy roam,
Ine gun mine pelt in,
Und umprella mine hedt on," sang Jack with the best German brogue that he could muster.

"where did you find that?" asked Mamie.

"That! why, that is imported, frills and all, right from Berlin. Nothing newer on earth, in earth or above earth. That has been revised and perfected by the queen of muses. She is my best girl, you know."

"Huh," said Ralph scornfully. Jack is getting so he blabs just like a Dutchman."

"Well," declared Jack, "my greatest grand dad was a German lord. One of the real kind. He had a castle on a high hill and lots of hard cases for soldiers. When he would see a merchant, or even a Jew peddler passing by, he would send out his soldiers to kill the traveler and bring in the goods. I tell you what, there were great people in those times."

"How did you escape getting scorched all these centuries?" demanded Mamie slyly.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jack for the moment puzzled for an answer.

"Oh, it was this way. I just gave a tenth to some one to pray for me and, well, you can plainly see how things turned out."

"Huh," growled Ralph. "Jack means that he was to green to burn".

"Haven't I always told you that you must not tell fibs," said Mr. Levins solemnly.

"That is no fib," declared Jack stoutly. "It is a whopping big lie. When I spin a crooked-ification, it is going to be big enough so that folks will know what it is."

"Whew," remarked Mr. Levins.

"Say!" exclaimed Jack. "Isn't it getting pretty near nick pick time. I am getting awful hungry."

"I don't doubt it," said Mrs. Levins. "You have developed an amazing appetite recently." For my part, I can't see where you put all that you eat."

"Oh, that is easily explained," declared Jack enthusiastically. "Mammoth cave number two is situated in the midst of my central territory."

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Levins, laughing and frowning at the same time.

"I saw Mr. Jooks watching Jack this morning," remarked Mr. Levins. "I don't believe that I have seen a more frightened looking man since I came to Arizona."

"I guess that he will survive," remarked Jack. "He won't be able to retire when he gets through with us though. I'd take a shine to that daughter of his if she hadn't such whopping big black eyes. It pretty nearly scares me when she looks my way. I almost believe that I need a cook anyway, now that my appetite is getting to be so healthy," he continued significantly.

"You had better get something to cook first," remarked Mr. Levins with a smile.

"That is a fact," declared Jack. "A cook without something to cook would be like an Arizona farm without irrigation.

"We must go back now, or rather I must. I must prepare for the trip to-morrow," said Mr. Levins. "You can do some more exploring if you wish."

"Are there any bears around here?" asked Ralph suspiciously.

"Better hunt around and see," remarked Jack.

"We should all go back to-gether," said Mr. Levins.

"I haven't any objection" announced Jack meekly.

"That is what I think," declared Ralph, "Somebody might get lost."

"I'll keep track of you," remarked Jack, "I wouldn't get lost if I were to go to pay the man in the moon a visit."

"Huh," growled Ralph. "I've heard you talk before."

"Come on, children," said Mrs. Levins. "We are going back to town."

"Do they call that a town in this country?" asked Jack quizzically. But Mrs. Levins took no notice of her son's attempt at jocularity and Jack subsided.

The family descended to the flat, passing the little unfenced graveyard on their way.

With joke and badinage for the time forgotten, they soberly discussed the possibilities of the future.

Jack and Mamie joined in the debate occasionally with a sense and clearness of preception greater than might have been expected of children of their age.

"It seems like Jack can act sensible if he tries," remarked Ralph in an aside to Jennie. And Jack, who happened to overhear, remarked good-naturedly: "Oh yes, I am badly lacking~~ing~~, I am, in the matter of ~~cents~~ c-e-n-t-s. Got the disease in a malignant form, too. Be careful that you don't get it. It is something pretty serious."

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V.

By Sentinel Butte.

Jack and his father, with the Holbrook man for a guide, crossed the Little Colorado the next morning, after the picnic, and rode away to the southward.

"cooking utensils and provisions for a week," explained the guide in answer to the questioning glances of father and son in the direction of the led horse and its pack. "We may need them and we may not. It will depend much upon how easily suited you are. I am going to take you to a claim of mine first. It is the best place that I know anything about, but of course you may not like it. Everybody according to their own notion, you know. It is rather a hard place to get to though."

"Have you a warranty tee deed?" asked Mr. Levin.

"Only this," said the guide as he patted the stock of his winchester. "It is a pretty good one," he added with a wink, and then laughed with a reckless mirth that rather jarred Mr. Levin's equanimity. But with Jack, the effect was different. The fierce recklessness of an animal-like strength and youth was his and, well, Jack dearly loved a joke

"And he who gets the deed has the land," he remarked with a dumb innocence, assumed, that caused the guide to emit another roar of laughter.

"Of course, of course," declared the Holbrook man, "Sure thing". Say Levins, what do you expect to make out of that green gawky of yours?"

"A man, I hope," said Mr. Levins mildly. "He surely will never be a milksop."

"I like milk," declared Jack innocently, smacking his lips in a very realistic manner.

"calves are apt to get branded in this country," said the Holbrook man pointedly.

"What do they do with the old steers?" demanded Jack eagerly.

"Oh, they ship them," was the reply.

"Oh, they ship them," exclaimed Jack in an awestruck tone of voice. And to himself he whispered: "I'll not forget," and then winked gleefully three times in rapid succession at a cottontail scurrying through the cedars that grew thickly about them.

The party drew rein shortly after noon and dismounted on a spot overlooking a small gravelly valley that was nearly devoid of vegetation. Only lonesome tufts of a short, curly grass grew upon it.

"What in the world is that?" demanded Jack, his mouth full of bread and tinned meat, as a series of yelping barks broke the silence of the wilderness.

"Coyote," said the Holbrook man shortly

"Coyote!" exclaimed Jack, "Gee, there must be fifty of them," he continued excitedly as he sprang to where Mr. Levin's rifle leaned against a cedar, snatched it up and quickly handed it to his father. "There," he said triumphantly and snatched up a couple of rocks that lay handy. "We will fix 'em if they come fooling around here."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the Holbrook man. Ha, ha, ha. About all that you will fix is grub. About how many do you think there are?" asked the guide addressing Mr. Levin.

"I don't know," was the reply. "Half a dozen?"

"You will have to guess again," jeered the Holbrook man.

"Fifteen," ventured Mr. Levin.

"Just one," declared the Holbrook man. Ha, ha, ha. And as measly a beast as you can find in Arizona. "Just one," he continued firmly, noting a look of incredulity on the face of the "tenderfoot."

"How do you know?" demanded Jack resentfully.

"How do you know that you will ever be able to grow whiskers?" demanded the Holbrook man.

"Oh, it seems to run in the family," ventured Jack saucily.

"Has your mother any?" was the Holbrook man's derisive question.

"Naw!" exclaimed Jack with a snort. "Men have whiskers and women do not."

"Oh, now I know what is the matter with you," remarked the Holbrook man with a grin. "Say, McLevin that youngster of yours is to fresh. He will get salted good and plenty before he has been here long if he does not learn that children should be seen and not heard. This is a bad country for a fresh tenderfoot."

"Jack is all right," asserted Mr. Levins. "He is a great fellow to talk and to joke, but he intends no harm. Let us be going. I am in a hurry to find a location."

"No hurry at all," declared the guide, "but we will be moving if you say so. People do not rush much in this country," he continued as he sprang into the saddle and started off through the pathless wilderness with father and son following indian fashion closely behind him.

"What was that?" exclaimed Jack excitedly as a lizard darted past the party like a flash and entered a den of rubbish that it had gathered at the base of a clump of cedars.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the guide. "That is the a monster of the year One. Be careful or it will swallow you."

"Not a bit of danger", declared Jack gaily. "My feet would be in the way. Say, pardner," he continued, mimicking the Western style of address in a free and easy manner, "are rabbits, cedars, sand, sagebrush and monsters of the year One all that we are going to see in the way of scenery this trip?"

"It is not at all likely, kiddie, not at all likely. There are wildcats, mountain lions, indians, and some other kinds of creation in this country and I would not be at all surprised that, if an old Apache squaw does not gobble you up, you will see so much that your ma will believe that you have been seeing double while away from her protecting care."

"Say pard," remarked Jack politely. "I thought I was some on the gab myself but—well, couldn't you give me a few lessons?"

"That wouldn't do, you have more mouth than muscle now," was the tantalyzing answer.

Presently the homeseekers came into a cleared stretch of country and were able to see about them to better advantage. To their left lay a long ridge from fifty to seventy five feet higher than the plain over which they were passing. "O. Gee!" exclaimed Jack. "Look at that!" he continued pointing to the right front. "Isn't it a beauty!"

"An antelope," remarked the Holbrook man glancing in the direction indicated. With head thrown back, the graceful creature was walking swiftly along as though to pass directly in front of the horsemen.

"I am going to catch it," shouted Jack in wild excitement as he slapped his horse roughly and urged it to a gallop.

"Whoa," called the Holbrook man authoratively and the horse obeyed so suddenly that Jack came near losing his seat. "You will run that horse into a prairie dog hole and break a leg for him, or else get your neck cracked, which wouldn't be much loss as there are plenty more tenderfeet."

"I don't see any prairie dogs," grumbled Jack.

"You can certainly see the holes," was the gruff reply, "the dogs can take care of themselves."

And Jack sighed longingly as he watched the white tail of the frightened creature go bobbing out of sight.

"Show up your next animule," sang out Jack, recovering his wonted spirits. "I like this exhibition. It is pretty nearly as good as Barnum's and the animals are not half so tame."

"I could show you the one original 'animule' if I only had a looking glass," declared the

Holbrook man pointedly.

"Oh," remarked Jack gazing earnestly at the Holbrook man, "I don't need a looking glass to see *that* one. The Holbrook man, caught in his own trap, began to discuss the different kinds of soil found in the region through which they were passing.

"We will camp here," said the guide. "There is grass for the horses and wood for a fire. We won't find any better place."

"This would make a nice field," remarked Mr. Levin as he *viewed* a strip of low land about twenty acres in extent which lay before them.

"You couldn't get water here," was the Holbrook man's remark. Water is the chief thing.

"A good fire will make things more cheerful," he continued as he piled dead cedars upon the crackling flame that he had started.

"Cedar is the greatest wood out to snap and crackle," he continued as the sparks began to fly in all directions.

"Why do we need so big a fire?" demanded Jack as he paused in the labor of gathering a bountiful supply of firewood.

"To keep away the spirits of Mangus and Geronimo," was the curt reply.

"Who are Mangus and Geronimo?" asked Jack, nothing daunted by the guide's gruff manner.

"They *were* two Chiricahua Apache chiefs," was the reply. "Got any water left in your canteen?"

"Yes, a little," admitted Jack. "Do those spirits want a drink?" he continued with an earnestness that was rather overdone.

"No," was the curt reply, "but I want some for this coffee. There is water down in that canon, but it is not fit for us. Hurry up, you poky sinner," he continued angrily as Jack fumbled and fidgeted with the stopper of his canteen. "I'll have to break your neck yet."

"Better not," remarked Jack. "It isn't long enough to tie and you would have me to bury and I am thinking, judging from your looks, that work and yourself are not on very friendly terms."

"O hell," roared the guide. "We don't bury dead stock in this country."

"Don't get alarmed, Father," said Jack soothingly, noticing a look of annoyance on Mr. Levins' countenance. "I and this wild and wooly Western man are only blowing off a little the extra gas that had accumulated during the last several hours riding." "Say, what a crackle!" he continued, noting the snapping reports given off by the combustion of the dry cedars. "I'd like to see a spirit," remarked Jack after a pause.

"Oh, who, who, who," cried a big owl from somewhere near by.

"Uh,' exclaimed Jack, paused for a moment, then shouted as loud as he could; "Anybody, anybody, loud." "Say pardner," said

I would like to hear about those Apache spirits and their noted doings.

"maybe, maybe," was the reply, "but you won't until after supper."

"I am afraid that they will *vamose* the ranch," said Jack. "I guess that I can wait though if you are sure that your forgetter isn't to strong to-night."

"It does not make a bit of difference whether my forgetter is strong, sick or dead, I never did hurry unless I wanted to do so."

"but since your wife told you to hurry up with that armful of wood or she'would break your neck'," said Jack who had overheard a certain curtain lecture a short time before. And the

Holbrook man made no answer.

"About how far are we from your claim?" asked Mr. Levins.

"'Bout fur agin as half," was the Holbrook man's reply. "We'll git there to-morrow forenoon, but as for miles, you'd better ask that smartie of yours."

"All right," volunteered Jack, without waiting for an invitation. "Just take the correct number of miles from here to that Arizona Eden of yours, add one hundred, subtract fifty, add forty, subtract ~~ninth~~ ninty, multiply by—"

"Shut up!" exclaimed Mr. Levins angrily.

"Why, father!" exclaimed Jack in seeming surprise. "You must be nervous to-night. I was just trying to intertain the crowd."

"Yes; I am nervous. Your gab is more than I can stand after riding all day

Jack gazed dreamily off into the gathering gloom, but his thoughts were of Mangus and Geronimo and their exploits.

"I don't believe that you could tell a story if you tried," declared Jack tauntingly to the Holbrook man after he tired of listening to the gen the breeze sighing in the wilderness about them.

"Yes I can," was the gruff rejoinder. "Lie, too." Do you want to take a few lessons?"

"What would you charge per lesson," asked Jack in a business like manner.

"Only One Dollar," was

The reply.

"You are away off," was Jack's brusque remark. "I don't need to pay a dollar per lesson to learn how to lie in this old world. There are so many teachers of that art that most of them will work for nothing.

Better tell us about Mangus and Geronimo, but don't lay it on to thick.

Go ahead now *like* a good fellow while I wash my share of the dishes. See," he continued as he proceeded to lick some grease from his fingers with his tongue.

"You would be scared out of a year's growth before I got through," jeered the Holbrook man.

"O now, come along easy. I'm not afraid. Guess that I can spare a year's growth anyway."

"All right," put some more

wood upon the fire," was the command.

"Some years ago, — once upon a time, as the professional would put it, Mangus and Geronimo got tired of reservation life and with a number of followers started out on a raid.

Geronimo wanted to make war upon the whites and Mangus wanted to go over into Mexico and rob and slaughter Mexicans. So they split up their forces and each went off on his own hook. Geronimo fooled around until he lost most of his followers in one way and another and was captured and taken to Florida. Mangus stayed over in Mexico until he had all of the raiding he wanted and then tried to get back into the reservation. He was captured, with one warrior, his child and wife, a fifteen year old squaw. Mangus was a pretty fine fellow, as indians go, but he, too, was taken to Florida. Although manacled, he managed to jump out through the car window when the cars were going at a lively rate. The train was stopped and his guards found him just recovering consciousness and about ready to bolt. The joke was on the redskins, though, when they got to Florida.

They hung up their meat out-of doors just as they would here and it was putrid in a very short time.

They could hardly understand the difference.

"Did you catch Mangus, or his fifteen year old squaw?" asked Jack solemnly

"Naw!" exclaimed the Holbrook man testily.

"Then maybe it was the papoose," suggested Jack. But the Holbrook Indian paid no heed, soon rolled up in his blanket, and snored so loudly that Jack began to pelt the offender with pebbles.

"Stop," commanded Mr. Levin. "You must not be so unruly. We need his services yet a while, and he will do more for us if he feels kindly toward us."

"Just as you say, Father," said Jack resignedly. "But I am much afraid that he will scare all of the ~~Ju~~ jack rabbits out of the country. I wonder where the North Star is, anyway," he remarked after a few minutes pause. "I can't see it, or either of the dippers. I can't tell north from any other direction and I half believe that

Things are turned wrong end to since we discovered Arizona. Did you notice," he continued, "that there are but few stars to be seen. This is a clear, bright night, but I don't believe that I can see one twentieth as many stars as I could see if I were back home, down on earth, I mean. Is this country so poor that it can't afford a reasonable number of stars."

"I don't know, my son, but I believe that the nearer sea level we are, the more stars we can see. We are about a mile above sea level here, and that may be the reason that so few stars are visible. I have heard or read, I don't know which, that people in the Yosemite valley can sometimes see stars at midday."

"Where can that north

Star be," grumbled Jack. "I do believe that the thing must be taking a vacation. Can't you see it? I am sure that I can't sleep until I find out whether my feet are pointing North, East, South, West, or some place" in between.

"What is the difference so that your feet do not take a vacation, too," said Mr. Levin with a laugh.

"Well," explained Jack with a grin, "I am used to going to sleep with my feet pointing to the Westward and if I don't know which way is which, I won't know which way to start for breakfast in the morning. Can you see that North Star?"

"There", exclaimed Mr. Levin triumphantly. "See the Big

Dipper lying low down toward the horizon;" he continued pointing to show Jack the place. "Now follow the direction in which the handle is pointing and you will see Ursa Major."

"Why!" exclaimed Jack, "It isn't in the right place at all."

"Probably nearer the right place than you are," was the dry rejoinder. "Perhaps I had better tie you to a cedar with a lariat for fear that you will wander away some time in the night."

"O, never mind," objected Jack. "No danger of anyone in Arizona getting lost so long as that old foghorn (nodding in the direction of the Holbrook man) keeps tooting."

"Let us go to sleep,"

said Mr. Levins. "We will soon get used to this kind of life and won't mind."

"I wonder if there are any dangerous animals about," said Jack meditatively. "But then," he continued, "they would never come near such a racket as that. So here goes," he said as he rolled up in his blanket and began a very fair imitation of the Holbrooks' man's snore. "Whew!" but that is hard work," he declared. "Now I lay me down to sleep on a bed of sand and rock. And if I should never wake, please leave that snore"—

"Shut up!" exclaimed Mr. Levins testily. "You are to reckless all to-gether. Suppose that God should really hear that flat?"

"Not much danger, I guess," was the reply. "He would never fool away his time stopping to hear what anyone that would live in such a country as this might bee be saying."

VI.

In The Shade of The Big Pine Tree

At the Western foot of a big hill (mountain, a plains man would call it) stands a big pine tree nearly four feet through at the base near the ground and possibly one hundred feet in height. Towering high above the plain that lies at the foot of the hill, it seems a lordly type of creation, but its stately crown does not reach to one half the height of the hill. To the southward a quarter of a mile or so away are other hills, masses of nearly bare rock with here and there a stunted pine or cedar clinging to some crevice. To the Westward stretches a plain almost as level as a house floor until seemingly lost in a cedar forest about one half mile from the pine tree.

But at the edge of the cedar forest is a canon more than two hundred feet deep. At the bottom of this canon, in dry weather, are pools of cool water (seeps) in which may be found in summer time, despite the temperature of the water, wigglers.

When the snows in the mountains are melting or a storm is in progress, a flood of seething, muddy water may be seen flowing along in its depths. The A. & P. railroad crosses a similar canon East of the Sanfrancisco mountains, between Winslow and Flagstaff. To the northward of the pine tree and about forty rods distant is a highland or *mesa*.

It is bare, rocky and uninviting with little vegetation. At the Southern base of the hill, (butte, more properly,) a spring of pure water gushes out from under a large rock and flows away until lost in the sands of the plain. Grass grew ranker here on this tiny plain than any seen by the homeseeker since coming to Arizona. Something, too, appealed to the sensibilities of the man. A cozy nook, a haven, as it were, protected from outside influences by mountains, forests and a highland, there, perhaps, might be found peace and safety from the perils of life. It seems to the writer that the natives of a broken country are more sturdy more attached to the place of their birth and more patriotic than the dweller of a plain.

Perhaps in ages gone when man was but a weak, poorly-armed creature, his chief means of self-preservation lay in hiding away in inaccessible rocks & corners of the earth, and the instinct of forgotten generations yet sways the hand blessed mammal.

And again, perhaps these are only fancies.

"This is *my* claim", the Holbrook man was saying, "I don't know of anything better. If you think that you would like to locate here, I will show you about. I'll do that anyway. I wouldn't mind ~~doing that any way~~ living here myself, but my wife says that she won't leave town. She says that I haven't get up enough to take care of myself, and that she won't be caught so far from civilization. Darn the women anyhow. They are so particular that they would find a flaw in a perfect man if he were green enough to marry one of them."

"It always seemed to me that there isn't as much difference between a man and a woman, as far as character goes, as there might be", remarked Mr. Levins dryly.

"Sure!" exclaimed Jack grandly. "A man is a man and a woman is a wo-man, and if she didn't make him get a hump on himself and swat him with the bald-headed end of the brown, she would need to be re-christened. *Sabe?*"

"When you get one, I hope that she will 'swat' you with a club," growled the Holbrook man vindictively.

"When I get one," declared Jack impressively, "I'll have one worth having. She must have brown eyes, be good-looking"—

"That wouldn't be saying much," interrupted the Holbrook man.

"Be six feet in height and weigh one hundred and seventy five pounds," continued Jack ignoring the interruption.

"Whew!" exclaimed Mr. Levins. "I am not sure that I want to be *her* daddy-in-law."

"O, that is nothing," declared Jack. "I expect to get to be something less than a seven footer myself. I ~~felt~~ feel as though I can stretch out all I want to now without crowding some one else. I feel as though I had all out-doors to grow in. And then he rose up on his tiptoes and swung his arms vigorously.

"Come on, Mr. Levin", said the Holbrook man, "and I will show you about and explain matters to you."

The Holbrook man proved a good land agent and all favorable items were carefully praised, but unlike a land agent, some of the unfavorable things were ~~favorably~~ frankly discussed.

"And this," he said as the

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trio neared the brink of the canon, "is the canon, grand for scenery but more of a nuisance than a help, unless you get tired of living and decide to commit suicide."

Or, if you have some dead thing that you wish to dispose of, just bring it here and toss it in. Do you want this claim?

It is as good as you can find," he continued.

"Yes," was Mr. Lewis hesitating reply. "Perhaps I might just as well take it. What do you want for your interest in it?"

"Fifty Dollars," was the reply. "The Mormons at Snowflake paid Eleven Dollars per acre for the squatter rights to that section; but I don't care to live here myself. Besides, some one might jump the thing and it would hardly be worth a funeral. I will help you nearly enough while you are getting things to start with so that it will nearly make up for the money," continued the Holbrook man noticing that Mr. Levine was looking rather sober.

"I haven't much ready cash," explained Mr. Levine, "and I fear that I shall not be able to make ends meet."

"Oh well," said the Holbrook man consolingly, "you are not the first fellow that I have heard about that was in that fix.

You will doubtless get used to that condition of affairs bye and bye and even be able to enjoy the sensation

"Were you ever in that

fix?" demanded Jack.

"Yes; lots of times," asserted the Holbrook man. "Rather inclined that way just now."

"I thought that you were looking rather peeked," remarked Jack triumphantly. "Say pardner," he continued, "how did that canon get manufactured? Did this country dry up so much that it cracked open; or what?"

"It must have been 'what'," growled the Holbrook man.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jack as if much enlightened. "What did what look like?"

"Like a dumb fool with a mouth for question," declared the Holbrook man.

"Were you around about that time?" asked Jack innocently.

But the Holbrook Man seemed not to hear.

"We will go back to the spring and camp until to-morrow morning, if you have seen all that you care to see," said the Holbrook Man.

Now if any blamed fool comes along and tries to bluff you out of this, just plug daylight through him ~~and~~ and toss him into the canon. You may have trouble and you may not. This isn't a very law-abiding country, but the fellow who is handy with his gun is all right if he uses plenty of good sense. Whatever you do, don't let some galoot get the drop on you. And don't let any one call you a tenderfoot. You don't need to be a tough, but let the toughs believe that you are a holy terror. *Savve*?" But Mr. Levins only opened his eyes very wide and said nothing.

"That is a fine tree", remarked the Holbrook man as he lay upon his back and gazed up at the foliage of the Big Pine.

"If I only had ten thousand of them over by the city of Chicago, I could sell out and live on the interest of my money. That fellow will make a good shade tree for your cabin when you get one. You will have to get ready and start business here right away, so as to be ready to put in crops when spring opens up in March. You will have to have a cabin of some kind, fences, a reservoir for water for irrigating, and ditches. Yes, it will keep you busy all right. You had better homestead this right a-w-

way. Do you see that cottontail up there under that ledge?" he continued after a short pause. "He'll taste good for supper." Drawing his six-shooter from his belt, the Holbrook man glanced quickly along the barrel and fired. Down came the rabbit from its hiding place, kicking spasmodically. Jack rushed forward and seized the unlucky creature by the hinder legs.

"How did you do that?" demanded Jack.

"How did I do what?" drawled the Holbrook man with feigned indifference.

"Why, put a bullet right through that rabbit's eyes at that distance. That was straighter than I could throw, and I am, or was rather, considered some on the throw

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back down on earth when we played ball."

"Just no trick at all for an Arizonian averred the Holbrook man modestly. "You won't make a respectable squaw man in this country until you can hit 'em every pop."

"Oh, um yum," ventured Jack. "Your deed seems to be drawn on a straight line."

"My deed is all O.K. none better," boasted the Holbrook man.

"And yet deeds sometimes get lost, strayed or stolen," said Jack meditatively.

"The fellow that monkeys with my deed will get worse than stolen," declared the Holbrook man with a mocking laugh. "Skin that rabbit while I find a toasting fork. Then get some wood for a fire and then we will rest ourselves until supper time."

"When did I get to be your nigger," growled Jack rather resentfully.

"Day before yesterday and your time isnt up yet," was the cool retort. "Get a move on yourself now and exercise a little or you will grow so fast that you will get top-heavy and be so ashamed of yourself that you cant hold your head up.

You will get *locoed* in this country yet," was the parting remark of the Holbrook man as he went off in quest of suitable twigs to use as rods on which to place pieces of the rabbit while toasting the same.

"Locoed!" I wonder what that means," ruminated Jack as he set about his task. It must be indian or Mexican. I never heard any United States jabber like that. Gee!" he exclaimed, startled as a lizard flashed past him, "wish I could move like that. I would soon get down on earth again and view something beside rock, sand and cedar. But then, maybe things are not so forlorn as they seem. This is a mighty cozy corner and I guess that it will soon seem like home. I believe that we are much what we make ourselves anyhow and a fellow can be happy, healthy and strong if he only sticks to the idea long enough. I would like a nice stream of water though, even though it were only a respectable sort of a~~x~~ creek. I'll fix that Holbrook man and his deed, see if I

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droit.

By a river sparkling bright
In a land of sweet delight
I would dwell for-ever mo-oo-re," sang Jack in his best style, but his voice, being in the transition period, ended in a mirth-provoking squeal.

"Does that boy of yours often do that?" asked the Holbrook man of Mr. Levins after indulging in a roar of laughter.

"Not very often," was the reply.

"Sounds just like a dying calf," declared the Holbrook man emitting another roar of laughter.

"I would just as soon be a calf as a donkey," remarked Jack in his sweetest manner.

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But the Holbrook man did not seem to understand.

"You should have a few cows to start on," remarked the Holbrook man to Mr. Levine. "Alfalfa will be just the thing here, but don't let your cows get at it when it begins to grow in the spring or it will be good by bossy."

"How so?" asked Mr. Levine.

"Bloat," was the laconic answer. "Kills 'em in short order."

"Where can I get two or three cows?" asked Mr. Levine.

"I think that I can find you some when I get back to Holbrook."

"Oh, you needn't bother," remarked Jack. "I'll just go out on the range and pick up some of those half-starved calves that are tottering about on their last legs and we can have a drove as soon as we can raise feed for them."

"Huh!" grunted the Holbrook man contemptuously. "You'd play smash, you would."

"How?" demanded Jack rather nettled.

"Did you ever hear about Stort?" Asked the Holbrook man of Jack.

"No sir; no Ort no Tort either," was the flippant answer.

"Well he was a tenderfoot just like you and he ascended from earth and swung from the limb of a tree with a rope around his neck and ~~a~~ some forty five calibre holes through him."

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"Well!" ejaculated Jack, his eyes opening wide and his mouth also.

"That was an ascension and a half. How did it happen."

"Happen! The blamed fool had a horse pasture and stolen horses kept turning up at his place and finally a crowd of the boys swooped down and took Stort and two companions prisoners. They all went away except two or three guards, but came back masked in an hour or so, overpowered the guards, seemingly, swung up the three men and riddled them with bullets. Don't fool with any beast in Arizona that don't belong to you. It might be worse than monkeying with a buzz saw. The old lady, Stort's mother I mean, was ~~a~~ here a short time ago to hunt up his grave and fix it up. She felt pretty tough."

"To bad; but such things can't be helped."

"Where is your sheriff, and your courts," demanded Mr. Levin indignantly.

"Sheriff be damned," growled the Holbrook man. "Why, about five years ago, there was a gang got to stealing. Sheriff Owens went after them and they resisted arrest, and what did he do? Just laid out the whole bunch, four of them, and one of them was only a fifteen year old boy at that. I can't see over much difference between that and lynching. You needn't get scared; things get pretty wild here sometimes, but no one is apt to interfere with you seriously unless you deserve it or some one lies about you. Just get handy with a gun and then be careful how you use it."

"Any danger of indians bothering us here?" inquired Mr. Levine apprehensively, remembrances of the wild west stories of his boyhood flitting through his mind.

"Think not," was the reply. "This is rather out of their way and the tribes are all peaceable now."

"I guess that they are afraid of the cowboys," remarked Jack.

"I guess that one cowboy could manage ~~mangy~~ a half dozen indians & some to spare."

"You be darned!" was the Holbrook man's emphatic exclamation. "These cowboys can brag, swagger around, and cut monkey-shines on horseback, but when it comes to the indian business, they would rather be excused. Don't figure on being a cowboy. It don't pay.

It is treat and be treated and deal cards, anything for excitement, [illegible] a dog's life that saloonkeepers and gamblers may live fat. Cut that whim right out of your noggin and toss it into the canon, frills, tucks, muffler and all. See that old sneak, will you?" said the Holbrook man pointing off to the southward.

"Where? what?" demanded Jack.

"Why there. Can't you see, you blind owl," replied the Holbrook man. "There by that big rock with the base worn so small by drifting sand.

"Oh, a dog," remarked Jack in an apologetic manner, wondering why he had not seen the animal before.

"Dog, your granny," growled the Holbrook man. "That is a red fox. If you don't learn to use your eyes better than that the oyotes will steal your dinner right from under your nose and you will never see them."

"Are they really so sneaky as that," inquired Mr. Levins doubtingly.

"Mighty near," was the reply. "I was up to Keenes' canon once to visit Jack Walters, he is a friend of mine, and I laid two cottontails that I had killed on a bench outside of the door while I went inside to sharpen my knife and when I came back, and I wasn't gone three minutes, they were both gone." At this point; the Holbrook man paused and elevated his eyebrows questioningly.

"Came to life and walked away," asserted Jack.

"So they didn't come to life," said the Holbrook man. "Two coyotes sneaked them."

"How, did you know," demanded Jack.

"I found their tracks in the~~ir~~ dust."

"Maybe it was a couple of dogs. Maybe you wouldn't know a dog track from a coyote track," continued Jack tantalyzingly.

"Yes I would," asserted the Holbrook man stoutly. "A tenderfoot wouldn't though," he continued pointedly. "The fact is, you are about the dumbest tenderfoot I ever saw. Do you see that wild animal so near you that it could jump right on you if it wished to do so."

"Where? where?" demanded Jack looking about him first one way and then another as quickly as he could. "I think that you are about the only wild animal near enough to jump on me," he finally said. "I'd think that you had the jim-jams, if we were not so far from a saloon." "Oh!" exclaimed Jack as the Holbrook man glanced upward. Sitting on a limb of the Big Pine about twenty feet from the ground sat a very large red squirrel calmly contemplating the party below.

"I'll make him get out of there," said Jack snatching up a pebble and springing to his feet.

"Drop it," commanded the Holbrook man. "You hurt that old fellow and I will give you the 'jim-jams' with this," he continued as he picked up a rock as big as his fist.

"Whew!" remarked Jack.

"He is an old friend of mine and to fine a lad to be disturbed by a tenderfoot kid. I see him and have a talk with him about every time I come here. Don't I, old boy," continued the Holbrook man addressing the pretty creature, and at this juncture, the animal ducked his bushy tail energetically two or three times.

"There, didn't I tell you!" said the Holbrook man triumphantly. "He knows how to say 'yes' better than Jack Lewis.

"Most any scrub can say yes, but it takes a man to say 'no'," asserted Jack.

"Then you don't know how to say it," was the rejoinder.

"Let us have some supper," remarked Mr. Levine.

"All right," said the Holbrook man. "Jack, build a fire while I mix some batter for flapjacks and we will soon do the Gypsy act."

"Good job that I don't know how to say no," mumbled Jack as he performed the appointed task.

"Did you get a pail of water?" asked the Holbrook man of Jack soon afterward.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Good boy," exclaimed the Holbrook man. "I am glad that you are so smart. Where is it, anyhow?" he demanded, gazing about in puzzled bewilderment. "I can't see it."

"Neither can I" was the calm remark.

"Oh, you blamed fool," ejaculated the Holbrook man. "Why did you lie over a little thing like that?"

"Well," began Jack with an injured air, "you can't expect a fellow to do something he don't know how to do. You convinced me that I didn't know how to say 'no,' so 'yes' was all there was left for me to say and I had to use that."

The Holbrook man strode away to the pocket for a pail and did not fully recover his good humor that evening.

Father and son watched the Holbrook man with interest as he attached the pieces of rabbit to the sticks and browned them nicely over the fire. The Holbrook man rolled up in his blanket as soon as supper was eaten and was soon snoring even louder than on the previous evening.

"Whew!" exclaimed Jack. "I am afraid that he will jar that squirrel out of the tree." Mr. Levins only smiled at his son's remark.

"Gee!" commented Jack, as an extra loud snort smote the silence of the evening, "I wouldn't be surprised to see that Butte tumble all to pieces if another like that shows up." That sort of thing rather shocks my nerves."

I wish that you would not exagerate so," said Mr. Levins earnestly. "He who can get things exactly right has the best chance of being a success in the world. We are much what we make ourselves and he who can break himself into the habit of understanding things as they are will make fewer blunders than he who cares not for the suitability of things".

"Maybe, maybe. But father, it is easy for me to say things like that and it makes me feel good. You said "He"," remarked Jack jokingly. "Seems like the women folks can do most anything they may please in this world. What a fine time they have."

Mr. Levin only laughed and Jack rolled up in his blanket and feigned slumber until his father went to sleep. Then he rose stealthily, secured the Pol—

brook man's rifle, revolver and cartridge belt and hid them in a crevice at the foot of the butte.

"I guess that deed is safe," he chuckled gleefully as he hurried back and again rolled up in his blanket. It was a good thing Jack had his laugh before seven o'clock the next day.

The Holbrook man was early astir the next day, bringing ~~wate~~ water, building the fire, and preparing a batter made from cornmeal, and making a syrup of sugar and water to put on the flapjacks. Jack ate thirty one fair-sized ones by actual count, and the Holbrook man who did the cooking in a skillet, became so angry that he exclaimed very forcibly: 'You blamed hog!'"

"A deer," exclaimed

Jack just as he finished number thirty one, pointing off toward the mesa. And then the Stolbrook man pushed pellmell to the place where he had deposited his firearm the evening before.

"Where in hell is my gun," he howled in frantic anger, dancing up and down in his vehement rage. "Such a good chance and some idiot has meddled with my gun. That is some of your 'monkey-work,'" he snarled as he glanced at Jack. "I know you."

"Gun, gun," mumbled Jack as if much mystified.

"Gun, yes gun, That is what I said. I put it right there last night," he continued indicating the place.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jack as if much enlightened. "I thought that you said that that was your deed."

"O you mullet-head!" said the Holbrook man explosively.

"I guess not," remarked Jack loftily. "You said that that was your deed to this claim and whoever got the deed would have the claim, or words to that effect. I have the deed and by the same token and now the owner of this claim."

"Get that gun," commanded the Holbrook man, "or I will break your neck."

"You can't spell able with forty two B's" was the taunting rejoinder. And besides, that is a friend of mine and I expect to shoot him myself some day."

"I can spell able with one hundred and forty two B's" was the Holbrook man's emphatic assertion as he rushed forward and seized hold of Jack.

Jack was taller and heavier than the Holbrook man, but despite his frantic though good natured struggles, the matured strength of the man was more than a match for the boy and Jack soon found himself flat upon his back and helpless. The Holbrook man deliberately plastered Jack's hair full of sand and dirt, washed his face with a handful of gravel and ended by chucking three handfuls inside Jack's shirt.

"Will you get that gun?" demanded the Holbrook man as he ceased operations and glanced in the direction of the now fleeing deer.

"Of course, of course. I intended to do that just as soon as I found out that I had to. It is a poor scrub that can't take a joke.

"Whew!" he exclaimed as he brushed the sand and dirt from his clothing and shook that inside his clothes downward, and finally emptied his shoes and stockings of the stuff.

"Hang and switch a country where everything is so ornery that they have to use pebbles for a washrag and sand in the place of water when they wash a fellow's face. Look here, mister, I would like to see a little proof of your blow to the effect that you have any valid claim to this Arizona Eden."

"Get that gun," was the command.

"Of course, of course," assented Jack, good-naturedly. "I have been intending to do that for a long time. Any particular hurry?"

"You bet there is," was the reply as the Holbrook man seized Jack by the ear and gave that member a twist. "Now march along lively or something will happen to you."

"Which way?" inquired Jack innocently.

The way that will lead to that gun," was the impatient answer. And the Holbrook man shook

Jack vigorously.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jack starting off with a rush in the direction of the butte and dragging the Holbrook man so swiftly that he loosed his hold and Jack leaped out of his reach. "That is about right," said Jack over his shoulder. "I lead and you follow." "There is your old gun," said Jack, pointing into the crevice.

"I never had any idea that a man would make so much fuss over a little thing like that. Now I want to see that 'proof.'"

"Come here," said the Holbrook man shortly as he led the way to a big rock a few feet away.

"See that," he continued, pointing to the following inscription etched upon the face of the rock:

JUNE 5 1885

JIM BORDEN
HIS CLAIM
CLAIM JUMPERS
BEWARE OF A FUNRAL

"Beware of a funral" read Jack in a mystified tone of voice, understanding what was meant, but feigning ignorance. "What is that?"

"That is something that happens to some folks just after they begin to burn."

"Any danger of my burning, queried Jack flippantly

"Naw," growled the Hot-buck Isaac. "You are to green. You would only sizzle."

VII.

The Wilderness Invaded by a "Tribe."

"Dick Artman wants to sell his things, he says, and will let you have them cheap rather than have a sale," said the Holbrook man to Mr. Levins. "These Mormons are always standing around watching for a chance to gobble up such stuff for nothing and you might just as well have the benefit as not. Dick is going to California. Come over and have a look at the things."

"All right," said Mr. Levins. "Whether I want them or not, my looking them over won't hurt either them or me."

"I do believe that you must be some relation to that smart is son of yours," remarked the Holbrook man as he looked Mr. Levins over from head to foot. "Well, here we are," he said as he paused in front of a low 'dobe house.

"Come in," said a voice in answer to the Holbrook man's knock.

"Hello, Jim," was the greeting as they entered the room.

"Hello, Dick," was the Holbrook man's free and easy salutation. "Mr. Levins, this is my friend, Mr. Artman. Now Dick, just show Mr. ~~Artman~~ Levins your things and if he don't take them at your price, I'll eat my hat."

"Better not," thought Mr. Levins as he glanced at the soiled, weather-beaten sombrero.

A good team and wagon,

a set of harness, cooking utensils, some furniture, a tent, a rifle, a cow, a grindstone, a supply of bedding, ax, dishes, and a number of other articles such as are apt to accumulate about a home were displayed to view and their merits and demerits faithfully discussed.

"What do you want for these?" asked Mr. Levins.

One Hundred and Fifty Dollars," was the answer.

"cheap enough, I should think," remarked Mr. Levins.

"Enough to get myself, my wife and the youngsters out of here, and we will trust to luck for the rest," was the joking reply.

"If you haven't quite enough, I'll trust you for a part of it," volunteered Dick Artman noting a downcast look before Mr. Levins' face. Mr. Levins was wondering whether it would not be better to make a break for other regions instead of staying in Arizona.

"I won't have many dollars left by the time I pay you for these things and pay Mr. Borden for the claim, but I intend to pay as I go and stop going when I can no longer pay," said Mr. Levins. "I'll take some of these things to-morrow, as many as I can," he continued.

"We'll take them all to-morrow," declared the Holbrook man. "I will take my team and wagon and Jack Eastman will take his and we will move you out there at one trip."

"I can hardly pay for anything not necessary," said Mr. Levins falteringly.

w.

"Pay be hanged." snorted the Holbrook man. "Who said anything about pay? We don't hold up a man in that way in this country."

All was hurry and bustle the next morning, but it was nearly ten o'clock before everything was securely loaded. Provisions for a month had to be bought. A plow was secured "as a loan" from a kindly disposed individual "until it could be paid for."

And then the little caravan was headed for the wilderness.

"All aboard for the Land of Promise," shouted Jack, as he, the last to mount upon a wagon, seated himself upon the highest article of the load — a hay-filled tick.

"Better keep still," warned Jamie. "People will think that there is something the matter with you."

"That wouldn't be anything strange," declared Jack. "I am the medicine man of the Levine ~~tribe~~ Tribe compounding charms (making grotesque motions) to scare away the hoodoos. When I get through with this job, I'll just change myself into a host of mighty warriors and protect the tribe from the attacks of ferocious rabbits, crows, coyotes, cannibals and other such dangerous animalculae

"Huh!" exclaimed Ralph scornfully, "I guess all the fighting you will ever do will be with your mouth."

"Dad up there with that wild and woolly Holbrook man is the patriarch of the tribe. I am the medicine man and a thousand brave warriors, and all we have to do for the balance of the tribe beside brother, Mamie and Jennie is to multiply Ralph by about sixteen thousand and then we will have quite a crowd.

Whereupon Mamie giggled, Jennie looked surprised and Ralph was so overcome that he could only ejaculate: "Pooh! you a brave warrior!"

Jack found to his sorrow, and with blistered hands, that the war-
piv act was his, and that an ax was his weapon and cedars that barred the progress of the little train the foemen with which he must contend.

The trip to the "Arizona Eden" took two days and the sun was setting when the foremost wagon halted beside the "Big Pine".

"What a monstrous tree!" said Mrs. Levins.

"What a big hill!" exclaimed Mamie. "It looks just like some one pretty big and strong had been down in the earth and just shoved it right up out of the centre of the earth.

"I did that when I was a big bug," declared Jack with a wink.

"You've got wind enough anyhow," growled Ralph who was cross and tired from the jolting of the wagon.

"All hands lend a hand," commanded the Holbrook man. "We must get this tent up instanter. The missus can get us some supper while we are doing it. Then we will ~~visit~~ hobble our horses and visit around the camp fire until we ~~can~~ find out who can spin the biggest yarn. Here, Ralph, Mamie, Jennie, get a wiggle on yourselves and get a fire going and get plenty of dry wood from that clump of cedars over there," he continued as he deftly drove a ~~staple~~ stake into the ground. "Here, Eastman, find me a new stake. This one is broken. Now, Levine, help boost the centre pole; now I'll hold her in place while you drive that stake over there just as I did the first.

"There," he puffed as he finished driving the last stake. "There is your house for mother to come and good enough for anyone. Here Jeanne," he continued authoritively, "help your mother. Jen and Ralph, take that pail and cup and go over there (indicating the direction) and get a pail of water for supper. Jack, get a move on your lazy bones and get some more fire-wood. We are going to have a glorious fire to-night."

"When did you get to be anybody in particular that you should talk so big," demanded Jack tauntingly.

"At the time I washed your face with sand," was the cool retort. "Step lively now or I'll give you another dose."

"All right," said Jack starting away, ~~and~~ taking steps about four feet in length.

"Who, who, Oh who," bellowed a big owl high up on the butte just as Jennie and Ralph had about half filled the pail

"Oh my," gasped Jennie in affright.

"Run, run," commanded Ralph, his teeth chattering with excitement and fear. And Jennie did run, with Ralph tagging closely behind, spilling water at every jump

"Why, what is the mat-

Ted?" asked Mrs. Levine in amazement as the children rushed pellmell up to the group by the fire. Jennie was to breathless to speak but Ralph managed to gasp: "A b-bear or a lion, I don't know which."

"Did you see it?" asked the mother somewhat alarmed.

"N-n-no," stuttered Ralph. We heard it, didnt we Jennie? There!' he exclaimed excitedly as the owl's unearthly cry again broke the silence. "That's it!"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the Holbrook man. "You are very tender.

And he laughed loud and long; a roar of hearty mirth that angered Ralph not a little.

"Wish I could laugh like that," remarked Jack. "Guess I'll have to practice a little. We ought to have some poetry on that charge for camp," he continued jokingly. That ought to become almost as famous as the charge of the Light Brigade. Couldn't you give us a few lines," he said to the Holbrook man in tones of mock respect.

"Not much," was the emphatic answer. "I am not built that way," which remark Jack hardly knew how to take, and went off and sat down on a stone by himself.

"I guess that Jack is doing some more of his foot thinking" remarked Ralph to Jennie in a confidential aside. "I expect we will hear something pretty soon. Ralph's expectations were realized. In a few minutes, Jack was heard singing in a lusty tone in imitation of the Holbrook man's voice;

"Ralph and Jennie went by the hill
To fetch a pail of water
'Who, who, who,' sang the wise old owl
Ralph ran and ran, and Jen came tearing after."

"'Taint so," asserted Ralph indignantly. "Jennie kept away ahead all of the time."

"Where is that wonderful story we were to hear by the light of a snapping cedar campfire," demanded Jack of the Holbrook man as the party were seated about the blaze after supper.

"Story! what story?" remarked the Holbrook man.

"Any old story at all," said Jack. "I was just thinking that you were a noted yarn spinner and might just as well do something to entertain the crowd as not. Have you a real old hair-raising article that will scare the owls out of their ariyour Eden?"

"That I have," was the reply. "One that will make your hair stand on end."

"My hair always points down like the grass watershed of a Filipino," declared Jack. Just wait a minute~~s~~ though until I get a lariat and tie down Ralph's. I wouldn't like to have him look like a wild man from Borneo."

"My hair don't need tying half as bad as your mouth," declared Ralph resentfully.

"To whit, to who, to who," mocked Jack and Ralph said no more.

"About ten years ago," began the Holbrook man, "I and my brother Sam had a cabin about two and a half miles from Fort Apache. There was an old medicine man trying to get the indians to make war upon the whites. Two companies of cavalry and a company of scouts went out and nabbed him. The troops were just going into camp while on their way back to the fort when they were attackt by the Apaches.

They killed the medicine man during the scrimmage and that settled his score in a hurry. About that ~~t~~ time an indian stopped before our door and sat on his horse looking at the guns hanging on the wall for fully ten minutes before he rode off. I noticed that some indians that I saw that day were not armed. I asked one of them that I knew where his gun was and he said that he had loaned it to his brother. We hitched up to go to the fort for some haying tools. Just before we got out our horses a band of indians came along, but soon rode off without saying so much as "how-do-you-do". We didn't know anything about the outbreak until we reached the fort.

I jerked the harness off one of the horses, and barebacked and without arms galloped back to the cabin to get six horses that we left there. We left the cabin locked, but just as soon as I got in sight of it, I could see that it had been ransacked and everything scattered about the yard. I rode around and around for some time to see if there were any Apaches about. I couldn't see any, so I rode up to the cabin. Everything was smashed up in great

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shape. The horses were gone and so was a cowboy outfit, saddle and bridle, worth more than a hundred dollars. There were several sickles though that they didn't touch.

I guess that the bucks didn't take a fancy to anything that smelled of work.

I was taken sick a few days after and wasn't much good for a while. My brother Sam saw a drove of indian ponies come down to a creek not far from our cabin. He came in and told me about it and said that he was going to run them in. He took a rifle and a grey horse, a scary beast, and went out. When he came to the place where he saw the ponies, he started to cross over. An indian that had lain concealed in the grass rose up, aimed at him and fired. Sam's horse wheeled and run like a streak as soon as he saw the gun. Sam glanced backward and saw the indian trying to get the shell out of an old-fashioned rifle. Sam made up his mind what he would do in a hurry. jumping off of his horse, he took good aim at the indian, who had started to run, and fired, shooting him right through the heart. Sam went and got the rifle and started for the fort on foot.

He hadn't gone far before he found that the horse had run into a pocket, a sort of a washed out place in the road, so he didn't have to walk back to the fort after all.

"A short time afterwards some Mexicans went out to gather corn in a bottom near our cabin. I thought I would ride out and get those sickles. The Mexicans all had ox teams except one. We had gotten pretty close to the cabin when a Mexican called out 'indians'. I yelled for them to come to the cabin and we would make a stand there, but they all started for the fort.

Of course I followed and I and the Mexican with the team of horses soon passed the rest of the crowd. The Mexican driving the horses was thrown from the seat, but hung onto the lines and managed to get back into the seat with the horses on the run. My! but maybe you think there wasn't a hullabalo with those Mexicans shouting, whipping and howling. They were afraid that the indians would head

head them off. There were sunflowers on one side of the road and corn on the other and we could see indians riding through the sunflowers and bending low to keep from being seen. They got poor Sam soon afterwards. He and some others went out to bring in the bodies of some others that had been slain by the indians and ran into an ambuscade."

"Well, is that all of that?" queried Jack as the Holbrook man ceased speaking and sat with the palms of his hands resting on his knees and gazed absently into the fire.

"Yes; all of that. And I dare say that you would not like the same kind of a pub. It is your turn now. Let us see if you can do any better."

"Me! exclaimed Jack as if much surprised. I haven't had enough practice to compete with a professional yarn spinner like yourself. Dad, over there, is such a goodie-goodie sort of a patriarch that he objects to my doing the Jules Verne act. He says that I put it on to thick," he continued with an injured air. "About how much of that you just gave us is true?" he added.

"Every word," was the emphatic rejoinder. "You need not be alarmed though. A warrior would never bother with such a green looking specimen as you are."

"Um yum, he hadn't better," remarked Jack with a yawn. "I ~~move~~

move that I move to bed on a bed of sand to the tune of Yankee Doodle Dandy. I guess that the fellow who got ~~to blo~~ to blowing about having a stone for a pillow must have lived in Arizona. Oh, ho, yum."

"Oh, bother the thanks," said the Holbrook man diffidently the next morning. "We didn't do it for either pay or thanks. I hope that you will enjoy yourselves here and make a success of it. If you get into a tight place just let me know and I will give you a boost. So long," he shouted as he whipped up his horses and started off with a rattle that nearly drowned the chorus of good byes shouted after him.

Mamie, Jennie and Ralph drew closer to their parents as the rattle of the wagons grew faint in the distance and the lonesomeness of the wilds seemed to settle down about them. Jack, however, with a bravado that was becoming habitual, swaggered about performing little tasks about the camp with an importance and self assurance that did not fully hide his real feelings at thus being deposited in an "Arizona Eden with only the members of the Levin family for company and miles and miles of wilderness on every side of them.

"I've a good notion to climb that butte and get acquainted with the old fellow's topnot," said Jack when he had finished the last task that seemed to need doing. "Maybe I can see Holbrook, Kansas City, the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific Ocean or, or something else worth looking at. Maybe I can see over into Woodraff, Snowflake, Taylor and Show Low and see some old Mormon sinner making love to a blooming daughter of Zion that he wants for his forty second wife. Gee, what a fine sight that would be. I could take a few lessons in the 'how' of it. Then I would be ready for business when I happen to run across ~~some~~ some Latter Day Saint of the female persuasion that is worth looking at. Here goes," he continued, starting off with long swinging steps in the direction of the butte.

"Come back," called Mrs. Lewis anxiously.

"come back," commanded Mrs. Lewis. "You will break your fool neck".

"Well, well," exclaimed Jack good-naturedly as he rejoined the family group. "I didn't know that I had that kind of a neck. Maybe it will be best for me to put off the Alpine act for some other day.

I've been so overworked whacking down cedars, building public roads, and other such doings, while on the way to this fair and happy Canaan Land that my corporosity is somewhat weary.

"I guess your tongue isn't weary," snapped Ralph.

"Oh, I could wag my tongue all day and it wouldn't get half as hot as your temper," declared Jack grandly. "It is used to severe exercise."

"Huh!" mumbled Ralph, and stood gazing out over the barren mesa that lay flooded with the morning sunlight.

Despite an apparent hostility that at times showed in vinegary speech, Ralph thought much of his big brother and there was no real schism in this unit of humanity, the family. Just and loyal and true one to the other, ready to dare, to do, and to sacrifice, they were a true unit, which, be it large or small, Mormon or Gentile, finds the greatest measure of success in the harmonious accord of the component parts.

And a unit in joy, in sorrow, in plenty, in privation, in peace and in danger they proved themselves to be unto the end of the last act.

VIII

The Way of the Pioneer

"Well father," "what is our first motion?" asked Jack.

"I believe that we had better get some pine logs for a cabin first thing we do. If we put up our cabin now, the logs will have a chance to dry out before next winter and the cabin will be healthier for us to live in. The dam ought to come next and then some fences. We will turn Ralph loose as cowboy to watch the cows and horses until we get a place fenced for them.

"I can't watch them in the night," objected Ralph

"That is a fact," said Mr. Levins, "We will need to build a corral for them so that we can shut them up at night or the brutes will go back to Holbrook first thing we know."

"How big are you going to build that fine log mansion," asked Jack, his thoughts again reverting to housebuilding.

"I should think that about sixteen feet square would ~~do~~ do us for a time. We could make two fair rooms out of that."

"I wouldn't do it," declared Jack emphatically. "Sixteen by twenty would be better. Then we could have two rooms big enough so that I could turn my feet around in them.

And besides, it wouldn't be ~~[illegible]~~ much more work and wouldn't take much more material."

"What do you say, Brother,"

asked Mr. Levins of his wife.

"I rather favor Jack's idea was the reply." If it does not make to much extra labor."

"Sixteen by twenty will be the outside measure of our 'mansion', as Jack calls it," said Mr. Levins with a laugh.

"Just a castle in the air so far," remarked Mamie." What will you have for a floor?" she added.

"We will have to use dirt, or else make a puncheon floor", replied Mr. Levins.

"I know something about a pun," remarked Jack," but a c-h-e-o-n is to much for me. 'What is it anyway?'"

"We will saw a big pine tree into lengths about six inches long, square the lengths, lay them down for a floor, call that a "punch-on" and quit," was the jocose reply. "We haven't any nails or any wire," continued Mr. Levins thoughtfully. "Maybe the best thing we can do is to dig a trench about two feet deep and set cedars big end down in it, that kind of an arrangement ought to last for years in such a dry country as this."

"I'll dig the trench", said Ralph.

"I'll help," declared Mamie.

"I think that Jack had better do the digging," said Mr. Levins. "He is better able than you are. You can come along with me and load the poles."

About half a mile away was a small cedar grove through which fire had run at no distant date and the dead cedars stood stark and bare but sound and hard to cut. Here they began work.

"What was that!" exclaimed Ralph in a startled tone as a lizard darted past him.

"Only a lizard, my son. It will not harm you."

"It went so fast that I could-nt see it," grumbled Ralph.

"Do you see it now?" asked Mr. Levins as the little creature emerged from its retreat in a mass of rock and gazed curiously at the (to it) strange beings.

"Yes; but I don't see anything about it to prove how it can go so fast," remarked Ralph meditatively.

"There!" exclaimed Jack in triumph as Ralph and his father came to a halt with the load of cedars," in a trench fifty feet long dug right out of a poor grade of adamant. Said trench lies due North and South, if it don't lie in some other direction".

"The trench is all right whether it is lying or running" assured Mr. Levins. "Better not hurry at your work. We will get there some time, and you are not used to the climate yet."

"Any use in jamming those up close to-gether?" demanded Jack when the first cedars were planted in the trench and tamped firmly.

"I don't believe so," was the reply, "but I am not in favor of leaving much space, although it will take more cedars."

"Can't we weave in

some branches, or something, in place of wire like they do when building a picket fence," suggested Ralph.

"I believe that we can," was the reply. "We'll try it anyway. That would make the fence stronger."

"I'll help," declared Mamie eagerly.

"We can leave that part until all of the cedars are in position. Then we will get a load of stuff and Ralph and Mamie can show us what they can do."

"I don't believe that there is another fence just like that in the U.S.A.", declared Jack two days later when the corral was finished. "We ought to take a section to the county fair. Maybe they don't have such things in Arizona," he added thoughtfully. "Where is the county seat anyway? maybe a county has no need of a seat out here in Uncle Sam's back yard," he added with a wink at Ralph.

"St Johns is the county seat," said Mr. Levins, ignoring Jack's levity. "It is probably seventy five miles from here."

"If I've got to go seventy five miles just to see a human ostrich eat glass, nails and limberger cheese, I'll just stay home and not go at all," was Jack's emphatic remark.

"You will see sights enough to keep you busy while we are getting things in shape here," assured Mr. Levins.

"All the same, I

would like to get a good look at the folks in the Mormon towns between Holbrook and Fort Apache.

I guess that the sight would be nearly equal to viewing a six-horned rhinoceros."

"I didn't know that there were six-horned rhinoceros'," ventured Ralph dubiously.

"Neither did I," said Jack cheerfully.

"Huh; some more fool gab," growled Ralph sourly.

"We will leave Ralph here to take care of things while I and Jack go for a load of pine logs for our cabin," said Mr. Levins to his wife. "We will need to hurry matters along or we will not be ready for the spring work."

"I don't see any

pines," objected Mrs. Levins who really feared to be left with only the girls and Ralph for company.

"Mother wants another nick pick," declared Jack.

"There are plenty of them about five miles south of here, so Mr. Borden told me," remarked Mr. Levins.

"If you don't wish to stay here alone with the children, we can shut the cows in the corral, put up dinner for all, and take a day off.

All but you will have to walk back though as the team will have a heavy load."

"What fine trees!" exclaimed Mrs. Levins as the family approached the pine timber, which stood at the base of some detached foothills. Tall, straight and neat, they surely deserved the description.

"Just the kind for our purpose", declared Mr. Levins.

"Whose are they," was the next query.

"Oh; I guess that they belong to any one that can get them," said Mr. Levins. I suppose that they are on public domain, but the juries in Arizona, so says Mr. Borden, declare that a squatter is no thief when he does that kind of stealing. That is, the man who settles in Arizona can expect to appropriate such stuff from the public domain as he may need and juries will declare him not guilty."

"That is a joke on the trees," declared Jack with a grin.

"Just joke that tree down", said Mr. Levins to Jack, indicating a fine, straight tree about a foot in diameter, "while I hobble the horses so that they can get something to eat.

"No joke about that," declared Jack. "That is hard work. ~~tot~~ Wish I could crack 'em down at one whack of the ax", he continued. "It seems like a waste of time to go hagging away for about ten minutes to get one of those things down. I wish I was one of those old style magicians, I'd flop these beauties over and have a castle in Eden in about two minutes and ninty nine seconds."

"That is about like old Joe Bennett's tale of how he could drive to town in seventy five minutes, three quarters of an hour," remarked Mrs. Lewis with a laugh.

"Why don't you strike twice in the same place?" demanded Ralph.

"It wouldn't do," was Jack's reply. "The two gashes might crowd each other and quarrel. Besides, I wasn't ~~f~~ brought up a chop-hopper and you couldn't expect that I should be perfection.

Wouldn't you like to try a crack at it and show the ladies how you can do it," he continued coaxingly.

"No," declared Ralph. "I am a cowboy and not a common day laborer. Give papa the ax and he will show you what a man can do."

"All right," replied Jack. "I never was stuck on sharpedged tools anyway. I generally manage to shed a little innocent blood of my own before I get through fooling with them so I would just as soon as not part company with this ax. If I should happen to slaughter myself, you wouldn't have any common day laborer to shirk your hard jobs ~~onto~~ on to. Then you would have to become peddlers and old clothes dealers and run opposition to the Jews

"Whew!" he exclaimed as he watched his father work, "That renowned parent of mine *can* *chop*. Strikes five times in the same place and never misses a crack to whack.

Wonder if I'll ever get to be a man? Seems like I am getting big enough, and eat enough, but have so far failed to make connection."

"You will be much what you make yourself," said Mr. Levins as the second tree fell with a crash. "It takes seven years to rebuild the body, but if you make yourself to be what you want to be in twice seven years, then well and good. A character or a constitution is not built in a day."

"I'll take your word for it," said Jack meekly. "But if I've got to work hard for fourteen years before I can become a good chopper, I'd rather not begin."

"Go couple the wagon out as long as you can," said Mr. Levins to Jack. "We will take a load of twenty footers to-day and come for the sixteen to-morrow.

Bring the saw here and you and Ralph can cut off the logs the required length while I cut down more trees."

"What will be done with the tops?" asked Mrs. Levin.

"It certainly will not do to waste them."

"We will come some time and get them for firewood," was the answer.

"O see that dog!" exclaimed Jennie as a red fox showed itself on the brow of a hill about forty rods away.

"That is a fox," said Mr. Levin. "Those fellows must be at home over most of North America."

"Couldn't have an Eden without a fox," declared Jack as he wiped the perspiration from his face.

"I wouldn't be surprised to see an elephant, a lion, or a whale running around loose in these parts most any time. I'll be much surprised if I don't see a few wild men and untamed ladies before long."

"You are wild enough now," said Mamie with a giggle. "If wild people should show up you would be so wild that you would never stop running."

"Sure, sure. No doubt of that. If there is any sort of an animal around here that is any wilder than I feel, I am sorry for them. I feel as though I would like to yank the teeth out of this saw and graft them in my mouth in place of those nature manufactured for me. There I'd look about like I feel. Oh, ah, woof! Rip, saw, haw— zipp!'"

"Shut up your noise", commanded Mr. Lemon. "You will attract the attention of everything within a mile of us."

"I'll venture the remark that no gold will be attracted by any noise that I can make", said Jack resignedly. "I can see how it is," he continued. "The Boss fore-ordainer of things has decreed that I shall belong to the big-bug class, but at the start I must get down and scratch gravel in Arizona, the one and only original site of Eden. Say, ladies and gentlemen, I would be immensely pleased if I could happen along here about an hundred million years ago and see how things look."

"I doubt it," said Mrs. Levins.

"You might get over being pleased in a hurry. Just be yourself and tune your fiddle to the tune of B natural and you will be more apt to get the straight of things," declared Mr. Levins.

"My musical education has been sadly neglected," said Jack with a forlorn sigh. "You couldn't expect me to be able to tell B natural from C unnatural. The zipp, zip of this old saw puts me in mind of the heehaw of a mule, and if there is anything musical about that I would like to have some one musical show me."

"Just keep pegging away, faithfully doing whatever thy hands find to do," said Mrs. Levine partly quoting. "Each morning see some task begun and each evening see that task done."

"I haven't any pegs," declared Jack. "And besides, neither of my hands hunt for hard jobs. It is these upper-ten bosses that keep the lowly laborer so allfired busy. I wish that I could be some one tremendous without waiting so so long. Seems like a waste of precious time. I guess mother means, only she didn't say it: 'Be up and doing, still achieving, still pursuing, learn to labor and to wait' or: 'Be not like dumb driven cattle, be a hero in the strife'. I tell you what," Jack continued philosophically. "It is very easy telling others what to do, but when you get right down and hustle yourself, it is something different."

"You could do more if you didn't wag your jaw so much," remarked Ralph. "You make more clatter than the saw."

"Oh well," remarked Jack patronizingly. "I am able to keep up my end of the job nicely and furnish a little chin-music extra for the entertainment of the assembled multitude. Nothing like being pretty nearly a six footer and still stretching. Say, mother dear, have you any lunch handy? Mammoth Cave Number Two is getting so hollow that the echoes are dying."

"Huh!" growled Ralph.

"'Mother dear!'" mimicked Mamie. "It seems to me that you put things on pretty thick when you think of something to eat."

"You would hardly expect me to call the only mother I've got mother cheap, would you?" demanded Jack with an offended air.

And Mamie admitted that she would ~~not~~ not.

"Sand and gravel would be more substantial filling for a cave," remarked Mr. Levin with a smile.

"Sand and gravel only tend to better the appetite of young roosters," declared Jack. "I'd be apt to swallow everything in sight ~~shou~~ should my appetite get any better, or worse, rather."

"Do keep away from the team and wagon then," said Mrs. Levin, smiling and frowning in solicitous distraction. I can't see where you ever got that gift of gab and habit of exageration. It surely is not proper."

"I can't see either," said Jack modestly. "People usually give me the things that they don't want themselves. Now, mother dear, are you sure that you didn't give me some of your cast-off peculiarities".

"No; I didn't," exclaimed Mrs. Lewis shortly. "I never had such peculiarities."

"I have," declared Jack. "You don't know what you have missed. It is most like taking a ride in a balloon to let your ideas expand into something immense."

"Did you ever have a ride in a balloon?" demanded Ralph reprovingly.

"No," admitted Jack, "but when I was about your size, I once tried to hold on to a big umbrella when the wind was blowing a jimmycane, and I can imagine the rest of the adventure. And then Mrs. Levins looked angry, Mr. Levins looked thoughtful, Mamie giggled and Ralph ejaculated: "Huh!", while Jack seized upon the box containing the family dinner.

"Say ma," whispered Jennie, "aren't you afraid that he will eat all there is in the box?"

"It won't be so bad if he spares the box," said Mrs. Levins crossly.

IX.

When Something From Nothing Grows

Building a house, even a log cabin was no child's play, as the Lewis' found out. The walls, built of logs chinked with split stuff and the cracks stopped with hot mud was no great task. Not was the floor, the finishing touch, a difficult task.

The rafters, sheeting and shingles had to be split and hewed into shape and they who could work at a given task passed many weary hours before the "palace" was finished. Then the dam with its vent seemed a never ending job. The ground was hard to work and a large amount of dirt had to be ~~moved~~ moved. Even when finished, it leaked badly, the dirt not being settled with sufficient firmness to keep the water from filtering through.

The fence, built of cedars "Mormon" fashion (laid with poles sloping supported upon stakes) was not a hard task but took time and strength.

"I'm mighty glad that job is done", commented Jack when the fence was finished. "Another job or two like that and the dam and I would strike for higher wages. I guess that I am getting to big for hard work anyway. I ought to be on exhibition in some dime museum as the smallest baby from the wilds of the Mogollon mountains. That would be a heap better than stamping sand in Apache county."

"I don't believe that

people would want more than one look at you," grumbled Ralph.

"Oh, that is nothing," assured Jack. "My brother Ralph has had more than forty four thousand looks at me and nothing strange has happened to him yet. Say," continued Jack as they entered the cabin door to put away their tools before going to the tent for dinner.

"We made a bad mistake when we built this cabin. I'll either have to quit lengthing out after while or else I'll knock a hole through that muslin dad nailed up there for a ceiling with my head."

"Pooh!" said Ralph scornfully. "That is most seven feet. You will never get that tall."

"Where is that tape

measure?" asked Jack. "We will see how far I have to stretch before I get to the limit. Six feet six inches short measure by a small fraction of an inch," he announced as he looked at the figures on the measure. "That is the limit. It is no use trying to get beyond that. That illustrious ancestor of mine would rather pare a little from my length than that I should damage that muslin any."

"Where are the rest of your chickens?" demanded Jack of Ralph as they walked toward the tent.

"They must all be there", protested Ralph.

"I only see fourteen. There should be seventeen. Have you counted them lately?"

"No," admitted Ralph. "I didn't think it necessary. Maybe they are out behind that rock," he continued as he darted away.

"I can't see where they can be," said the puzzled boy when he returned.

"Something has eaten them, probably," said Jack soberly. "Father gave them into your care, and you must keep your eyes open pretty wide or that flock of chickens will be minus."

"If they are gone, I'll minus the thing that got them," growled Ralph angrily. "He don't wan want to fool around these parts if he don't want to get what is coming to him."

"I guess that you will have to catch he, she or it before you do anything serious," remarked Jack tauntingly. "We will have to make a good house for them right away and shut them up nights,"

"But suppose it comes in the daytime," said Ralph.

"If that is the case, we will show it to the old gun and say 'sic 'em'," explained Jack. "There is no telling what kind of fierce and bloodthirsty animals there may be in this wilderness. We will think the matter over this afternoon while making irrigating ditches and maybe something will happen."

"Hey, Ralph!" shouted Jack a few minutes before sunrise the next morning, awakening Ralph from deep slumber, "Another chicken gone and I saw the beast that got it.

"What was it," asked Ralph, the unbidden tears blinding his sight.

"It looked like it might have been a coyote," was the reply. "I never saw one, but I can guess pretty close."

"The mean, devilish brute!" ejaculated Ralph hotly. "I'd like to smash the thing into bits. It is a pity if anything can't live in the world unless it is as big and strong as an elephant."

"You don't mean to say that a coyote came right up by our tent and took a hen," said Mrs. Levins doubtingly.

That is just what it did," assured Jack. "I saw him.

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The chickens were just beginning to move about when the sneaky beast dashed in among them and caught one for breakfast."

"We must build a henhouse to-day," said Mr. Levine. "We can't afford to lose all of our hens."

"I am going hunting," declared Jack along toward evening when the henhouse was nearly completed. "Maybe I can murder a jack rabbit or a cottontail. They aren't as large or as strong as an elephant. I am beginning to think that life is a fighting game anyhow and the animule that is the biggest or the brightest has the best show to have pie for supper!

++ "Hey, Ralph, do you want to go along and carry the game?"

"Yes, I will go along," agreed Ralph. "But I won't carry any game until you get it. We can bring home the cows when we come back."

"That will be killing two birds with one stone," said Jack with a laugh. "Now keep your eyes open wide and let me know when you see any game."

The boys had not gone far when up jumped a jack and loped away from them in a self-confident manner. Jack raised his gun, sighted and fired but missed his intended victim.

"Huh!" growled Ralph in a disappointed tone. "If I could not do better than that I'd use a bow and arrow or throw stones at things."

"Let me see you go hunting with a bow and arrows," said Jack calmly. "I believe that you would make a first rate Kiowa warrior. I would like to see the game you would get, too." And Ralph stubbornly resolved that he would go hunting with a bow and arrows, but said nothing.

Jack had better luck next time and succeeded in killing a cottontail. Soon after, he obtained a sitting shot at a big jack rabbit that was sitting in a clump of cedars and the boys started for home.

"Let us hang our game on this bush while we eat supper," said Jack as they paused near the cabin door.

"We are going to have fried rabbit for breakfast," announced

Jack confidentially as he pushed back from the table after partaking heartily of the food.

"That sounds good," said Mr. Levins.

"I like rabbit," asserted Mamie.

"Me, too," announced Jennie.

"It is better than salt pork," said Mrs. Levins. "How many did you get?"

"Two," was the reply. "A jack and a cottontail."

"He missed one, too," said Ralph in an agrieved tone.

"One and two make three", declared Jack with a grin. "Come see my game," he continued. And the whole family followed Jack out to the bush whereon the rabbits had been hung.

"What is the matter,"

exclaimed Jack dumbfounded. "Is not this the place where we left those rabbits?" he demanded of Ralph

"I guess that it must be," was the puzzled answer, "but I don't see any rabbits. Are you sure that they were really dead?"

"Dead! Well, yes. Maybe Arizona rabbits can fly away to a rabbit paradise when they are dead," said Jack in a mournful voice.

"Go get me the gun," said Mr. Lenin who had been examining the ground. Taking the gun, he walked slowly in the direction of the butte, carefully scanning every tuft of weeds and every bush. Suddenly a pair of coyotes leaped out of a clump of grease wood and attempted to whisk around a big rock and escape from view. One was to slow, however, and received a charge of heavy shot that knocked him over and stopped his thieving forever. Ralph rushed forward and began pounding the dying creature with a club. "Take that, and that, and that," he ejaculated between blows. "I'll show you how to steal hens."

"Stop," commanded Mr. Levins. "That is unnecessary."

"Ralph is a dandy hand at killing ~~ded~~ dead coyotes," remarked Jack in a mock admiring tone. "He can do better than I can myself."

— 54 "No rabbit for breakfast," said Mrs. Levins as she viewed the remains. "It will be a wonder if they don't take to coming right into our tent and taking the food from our plates."

"I never had any idea

that I would have to hunt rabbits to fill the maw of a hungry coyote," remarked Jack. "There is no telling what will happen to a fellow though. Probably I will be called upon to raise hay to feed prairie dogs next jump."

"Very likely," said Mr. Levin. "I understand that prairie dogs are a nuisance. One thing, if we are pestered by such things, we can kill them off, if we are smart enough. If a human being troubles us, we need to be cautious for fear an officer gets on our trail."

"Who would know if we should paralyze a man who wouldn't leave us alone, if we didn't tell?" queried Ralph.

"It isn't best for people to get reckless," said Mr. Levin soberly. "'Murder will out' is an old saying. And besides, I wouldn't want to kill a human being on account of after thoughts."

"Not if he were awful mean?" persisted Ralph.

"No, not if he were awful mean," replied Mr. Levin.

Jack, hearing and heeding, contrary to his usual custom, said nothing, but his eyes gleamed with a new light as he glanced about at the natural barriers that shut in the little "Eden" from the vastness of the wilderness that lay stretched about them for many a mile

"What are those things down there", asked Mamie pointing in the direction of the canon, "They look like Pat Murphy's geese."

"They are geese all right," declared Jack, who had the most far-

"There you are," he declared with a flourish of his hand.

"Oh, you goose," exclaimed ~~J~~ Mrs. Lewis with a laugh. Those are not geese. They are ducks."

"They are the nearest like geese of anything that I could get," declared Jack calmly.

"Where are the geese?" demanded Ralph.

"Oh; the geese didn't like my looks," replied Jack. "I didn't look goosy enough to suit them and I expect that they have gotten over to Snowflake by this time and are taking a peep at Bishoff Hunt."

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"It seems to me that any man who would try to provide for more than one woman is worse than a goose", said Mrs. Levins.

"Any woman who would try to manage more than one man would surely be a dumb fool," retorted Mr. Levins.

"Can't say. Haven't had any experience," remarked Jack blandly, "but if I keep on growing a few years longer, it will take about six women folks to keep my end of the teeter board from hitting the ground pretty hard.

"Hush, you!" growled Ralph. "If you keep on growing a while longer, we will have to tie a rope to you and stake you out somewhere to keep you from tramping on things. And Jack laughed as heartily as any.

"Brother Ralph is a good one to think of the odd, queer and curious," remarked Jack. "I couldn't have thought of that if I had tried," he continued. "I haven't imagination in that direction, my talents run more to poetry."

"You had better compose a good love song before you start out to persuade six girls that you will love, honor, obey, feed and clothe them," said Mr. Levins with a chuckle.

"I wouldn't wonder, I wouldn't wonder," said Jack thoughtfully. "But say, wouldn't it be a terrible strain on a fellow's thinking machine. I wouldn't want mine to slip a cog or crack any of its cast iron fixings."

X.

A Pleasure Trip And a Clamjumper.

"Say folks," began Jack just before breakfast one morning. "I am getting tired of the pleasures of the wilderness and would like to see some one that I don't owe a good turn or two. Why can't we take a pleasure trip down to Holbrook town, just for a change. Maybe my best girl has written me a letter and I wouldn't like to trust Postmaster Chaffee to take care of anything so important for long."

"Maybees don't fly in Arizona," remarked Ralph.

"Well, mother, shall we go?" asked Mr. Lewis of his wife.

"I would like to do

so," was the reply. "We are out of some things that we need and some one should go soon. It seems like we might as well all go and have a pleasure trip."

"The cowboy cant go," said Jack with a grin. "He must take care of those cows."

"We will put them in the south field," said Mr. Lewis.

They will have to stay there until we get back. We will fasten the cabin door and take the tent along, to use on our trip. We can shut the chickens in their house and give them a dish of barley and a pail of water and they will be all right."

"There is one animule yet that you haven't thought about," said Jack opening his eyes very wide.

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Levins.

"That saw horse over there," was the answer. "I'd feel pretty bad if a coyote should swallow that," he continued in a matter-of-fact way.

"Jack thinks that he is smart," grumbled Ralph.

"What will you do with the horses?" asked Jennie

"Oh, we will take them along for company" was the answer. And Jennie, recollecting, laughed merrily.

The chores were soon done, breakfast eaten and the family, with cooking utensils, guns, tent, ax, and other necessities loaded into the wagon. Out of the little vale, up onto and across the barren mesa, and along the wagon trail made when they had moved to "Eden", as Jack called it, the family took their way. Holbrook was reached without adventure or mishap and old acquaintances renewed. Mrs. Levine did her shopping at the A.C.M.I.

Her husband said that it was because she expected to get rid of him and become number seven for some of the Mormons. Mr. Levine did his trading at Schuster Brothers store;

Mrs. Levine said that it was because he (Mr. Levine) was part Jew himself. Jack strolled over to Zook's hotel and made himself agreeable to Miss. Zook for fully an hour. Jack declared that he did so because he thought she was a nice little woman. Mamie said that it was the daughter that

Jack went to see. Jack denied the truth of the charge flatly, declaring that if he ever got married, he wanted a wife "big enough so that he could find her in the dark without stepping on her". Ralph declared that Jack went to Zook's because of a certain plate of candy that was to be found on the centre table. Then Jack looked thoughtful and forgot to say anything.

The Lewis' pitched their tent on the flat that night but were early astir the next morning and ready to start on the return trip. Then arose a discussion, started by Jack and finally agreed to by the others.

"Let us go by way of Woodruff and Snowflake and see the sights," he said. "We might as well take in all of the free exhibitions available," he continued coaxingly.

"Well, here goes," said Mr. Levin as he started Eastward along the Railroad track, "for the high moguls of Zion and the haunts of the Latter Day Saints, I expect that I shall accumulate so many patriarchal notions and so much Solomon-like glory in just passing through those angelic settlements of the blessed that I will want an extra wife right away."

"You hadn't better," said Mrs. Levin warningly.

Past a headland with seams of some whitish substance, past a dobe hovel with a white cross on its front, past a lone frame house, and across the now dry bed of the Rio Puerco, past the dobe houses of some Mexicans, past the dam across the Rio colorado, built for irrigation purposes) and up on to the mesa, proceeded the Levine "tribe" scanning every object of interest closely.

"Did you get that soap?" asked Mrs. Levine anxiously when they were about two miles from Holbrook.

"No; I didn't," exclaimed Mr. Levine in a scared tone of voice, "I forgot all about it."

"O you fool," said Mrs. Levine emphatically. "We will be fifty miles from nowhere and not a bit of soap about. We will be worse than a pack of hogs."

"I'll run back and get some volunteered Jack, "I can run four miles in less than half a day. Be sure that you have dinner ready when I get back," he continued as he leaped to the ground.

"Hold on," said Mr. Levins. "We can surely get soap at Woodruff or Snowflake. There is no use in going back to Holbrook."

"I am somewhat disappointed," declared Jack in an aggrieved tone of voice. "I thought that I was going to get a chance to exercise my running gear a little so that I should be in good trim should any of Jim's angelic daisys try to corner me while passing through their town."

"I guess that Jack is getting Mormons on the brain," mumbled Ralph. "He talks about them a heap anyway."

"I wonder how

that got here," remarked Mamie meditatively as they passed the Woodruff butte.

"That was caused by volcanic action, I should think," said Mr. Lewis. "Did you notice how the rocks were turned up on edge a mile or so back?"

— 58 "I wouldn't like to have been around here when Mother Earth grew that wart on her face," said Jack. "It must have been pretty hot hereabouts."

I guess that butte was more like a boil than a wart in the days of long ago."

"Why, these Mormon people look just like common people," said Ralph in surprise. "I don't believe that they are as good-looking as we are," he continued a little later.

"They would have to get up pretty early in the morning to be as good looking as you and I," declared Jack with a vigorous wink.

"Here," began Mr. Levine, speaking to Jack, "just chase yourself down to that big store building and get this dollar's worth of soap. Then we will never look like a pack of hogs so long as the soap holds out."

"What shall I do if three or four beautiful Mormon girls grab hold of me?" asked Jack as if in deadly earnest.

"Bring them along, bring them along," exclaimed Mr. Levine shortly, annoyed by his son's would-be funny clatter.

"But they might carry me off and make me wear my bright young life away in the vain endeavor to keep their bishops and other bigbugs fat," said Jack in a mock-terrified voice, unabashed by the reproof in his father's voice.

"Oh, go along," was the impatient command. "You are in no danger. They would let you go as soon as they heard your tongue rattle.

"Oh-h-h," said Jack as he started away in the direction of the store, stepping high and glancing quickly about him as though expecting attack from something dangerous.

"People will think that he is an escaped lunatic," said Mrs. Lewis in disgust. "I can't see where he gets so much nonsense."

"It is just monkey-work, but I do wish that he would be a little quieter. He would get along a little better in the world. Just see him now," continued Mr. Levins in a vexed tone of voice as he beheld Jack approaching with kangaroo-like leaps and bounds.

"My—but I—had a—narrow—escape," declared Jack gasping for breath and rolling his eyes wildly. "Did you ever see an old ewe with a long foretop of wool that nearly hid her eyes? Well, there was a girl down there with bangs fixed up just that way. There was another girl there with a mouth so big that I almost fell in and—"

"It is a pity you hadn't," interrupted Mr. Levins angridy. "Jump in here and let us get out of this before we are arrested for wild people."

"This is the first time that I ever saw a bridge built on the inclined plane order", remarked Mr. Levins as he viewed the bridge across the Little Colorado, one end of which had sunken several feet lower than the other, with considerable interest.

"It seems like most of the Arizona rivers—if they deserve the name of rivers, flow through narrow gullies, or canons", said Mrs. Levins.

"What made those canons?" queried Ralph.

"The water, I presume", said Mrs. Levins.

"Where did those pieces of petrified wood that we ses scattered about come from?" was Ralph's next question. No one made any answer~~s~~ and Ralph, wondering why Jack had nothing to say, looked expectantly toward his big brother.

"I didn't put them there," was Jack's hasty disclaimer.

"I wonder what the name of this river is," said Mamie as they crossed the little stream that furnished thee water for irrigation purposes for the farmers of Snowflake, Taylor and Show Low and they entered the sandy roadway that led up between fenced fields to Snowflake.

"Ask something easy," said Mr. Lewis.

"Some log cabins, some frame buildings and here and there a brick building," remarked Mr. Levins. "Quite a town.

I wonder what that big two story brick building up there is;" he continued. "We will drive up there and take a look at it."

"'Stake House'," said Mrs. Levins, noticing the words high up on the front of the building. "I wonder what that means."

"I give it up," said Mr. Levins.

"I don't see any stake," declared Ralph.

"I'll just bet there is one somewhere about though," said Jack glancing hither and thither.

"Jack is looking for more bangs and big mouths," declared Mamie. "There is the one that Jack has been looking for," she declared as a very large, bony, woman about fifty years of age passed by on the other side of the street.

"I'll leave that one for dad," declared Jack gazing up at the bell in the tower.

"She wouldn't do for me," said Mr. Levins. "Boys and young men often fall in love with women older than themselves, but when a man gets to be my age, a girl about sixteen is about the right style. We will drive up this way for a ways and then we will go back down towards the ford again.

We will camp near the stream for to-night and start for home in the morning."

The Levins' pitched their tent at the edge of the cedar scrub, or forest, near the head of the canon and enjoyed themselves

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thoroughly. Jack shot a couple of cottontails and a jack rabbit.

Some of the choicest pieces were spitted on sticks and roasted over a blazing fire of cedar wood.

Other portions were cooked in the frying pan and a delicious gravy prepared. Jack didn't get enough, declaring that it would take at least two big jacks to fill one Jack and that he would go hunting again in the morning before breakfast.

"The homeward trip through cedars, sand and other obstructions was a tedious one and it was noon of the second day before the family came in sight of their cabin. Jack had gotten out of the wagon a couple of miles back to hunt for rabbits and was not with the rest of the family when they halted the team by the cabin door.

"I am glad to get back," sighed Mrs. Levins.

"So am I," declared Mamie. "That old wagon is an awful jolty thing."

"Hands up!" rasped a shrill, unpleasant-sounding voice. Mr. Levins turned in amazement, and he fairly stupefied by the command and by surprise at finding a stranger in "Eden", found himself staring into the muzzle of a sixshooter backed by a rather repulsive-looking man.

Unkempt and nervous, he was evidently not of the better class; a sort of a submerged tenth man.

Mrs. Levins, the gun was not pointed her way, was the first to recover speech. "This is our house," she said. "Are you crazy, to act that way? Put that gun away or we will send for the sheriff."

"Sheriff nothing!" growled the man. "You fools have jumped my claim, and I'll let daylight through every one of you if you don't get out of here."

"Did you build that house?" asked Mr. Levins mildly.

"No," admitted the intruder in a high-pitched voice, "but it is mine just the same. Get out of here or I'll kill you."

"How did all these things—these improvements, get to be yours?" persisted Mr. Levins politely.

"This was my—

claim and you jumped it," declared the intruder hotly. "You can't take a man's claim from him just as you please in Arizona."

"We bought this claim of James Borden of Holbrook," said Mr. Levins. "If you have any claim to this region, you had better see him. He will attend to your wants all right."

"Jim Borden is a low-down sneak," fairly howled the claimjumper. "He would sell Chicago if he could find some fool tenderfoot that would buy. Take that." he yelled, firing the sixshooter at Mr. Levins' head. Mr. Levins dodged downward with an agility that would have done credit to a younger man and the bullet flew above the intended mark. Before the ruffian could fire again, Jack, who had come up from the other side of the cabin and had heard a part of the conversation, darted around the corner of the cabin and flung himself upon the unsuspecting intruder and crushed him to the ground.

The man attempted to turn the sixshooter upon Jack, but Jack caught him by the wrist and forced his hand backward so violently that the gun fell to the ground and was quickly appropriated by Jack, who was now thoroughly angry.

Jack, with his eyes gleaming wickedly, arose to his feet, releasing the desperado. "I am much obliged for the gun," he remarked in a dangerously smooth tone of voice. "I have been wanting one like that for a long time, but never for a moment supposed that such a measly-looking beast as you are would be kind enough to give me one. Would you like to know how a pill from this thing would feel?" he continued pointing the sixshooter in the direction of the now frightened man. "Off with that cartridge belt."

"Don't shoot, don't shoot", he whined. "I was only foolin'," he continued as he flung the belt down at Jack's feet

"Got badly fooled", didn't you?" jeered Jack. "What are we to do with this—coyote," Jack asked of the parents.

"Oh, let him go," said Mr. Levins. "Will you trouble us any more;" he continued, addressing the defeated intruder.

"No," was the surly answer, And Jack, watching closely, noted a treacherous gleam in the eyes of the claimjumper.

"It would be more sensible to shoot him and throw him in the canon," said Jack warningly.

"Oh, no, no, no," murmured Mrs. Levins in distress. "He has given us his word that he will trouble us no more, and I am sure that he will not."

"Just as you people say," assented Jack with an energy and temper that surprised the rest of the family. "Such cattle are not to be trusted and maybe the next time that he tries to shoot one of us, he will have better success. Get gone," commands ed Jack fiercely. "If I ever catch you fooling around these parts again, I'll make mincemeat of you."

The claimjumper started away, resentment and hate showing in every outline and motion of his body. He did not look backward until he had gotten about a hundred yards away; then he wheeled suddenly, shook his fist menacingly at the family and began to curse them fiercely. Jack immediately raised the sixshooter and fired.

The bullet struck the earth at a considerable distance behind the claimjumper and he turned and raced away for the shelter of a cedar thicket.

"Don't," expostulated Mr. Lewis. "You might hit him."

"I don't care," declared Jack angrily. "He would hit me if he could and I would rather do the hitting myself."

"I always thought that Jack was awful good-natured," remarked Ralph meditatively in an aside to Jennie. And Jack, overhearing, said; "I am, very, most of the time; but when such a beast as that gets to fooling around, I am apt to feel a little reckless. If people do not want me to be reckless, they had better not try to be to rotten in my direction. *I* wonder if he interfered with anything."

"Nothing but some of the victuals," said Mrs. Levins after a careful search.

"He must have thought that he had just struck it," said Mr. Levins. "I hope that he does not bother us any more."

"There is a hen that wants to set," announced Mamie that evening as she returned from the log henhouse. "Where shall we put her?"

"I'll fix a place," announced Ralph. "And I'll be sure that no coyote will get her." Ralph built a good place for biddy, but he failed to take into consideration the fact that coyotes were not the only animals in "Eden" that fed upon poultry and poor biddy had been at her task less than a week when the family were aroused at about two o'clock in the morning by her frantic squalling. Jack seized a club and rushed forth to the rescue. The dim light of the waning moon was insufficient and Jack could see little so he rashly overturned the crop. Catching sight of a black and white object, he belabored it with the club with a savageness that promised immediate death to the intruder. Jack got the full benefit of an oder that a certain malodorous animal disseminates. He manfully kept up the attack until the creature lay limp and passive in death, then he retreated to a distance and lay upon the ground gasping and vomiting.

"My goodness, what a stench!" sighed Mrs. Levins.

"You wouldn't say anything about goodness if you had gotten as many bushels of perfume as came my way," groaned Jack miserably.

"You had better go bury yourself," declared Ralph unfeelingly. "You hadn't any business to let the brute get such a chance at you."

"I'll let you look after the next setting hen that squaks in the night," declared Jack resentfully.

And then Ralph looked thoughtfull.

"That animal is what scientists call a mephitis mephitica," said Mrs. Levin.

"Well, they just hit it," declared Jack ironically. "We went out for a fight and we got it, and then we most had a fit. I guess that those scientists must have had a little experience themselves before doing the naming business.

I wish that some of you would get me a drink."

"Don't let him drink out of our dipper," warned Mamie hastily.

"Oh, the slop pail is

good enough for me," growled Jack sullenly.

The Levins' finally compromised on a tin basin that was full of holes stopped with rags, and about to be thrown away.

XI

Just Living

The days that followed Jack's adventure with the skunk were days of toil with little of gain in sight. Plowing, planting, irrigating and cultivating day after day with no human being in sight but the members of the family had a different effect on some of the family than others. Ralph and Jennie were blissfully content, Jack oblivious of everything but the welfare of the "ranch". Mr. Levins was noncommittal and refused to discuss the question of contentment with their present lot. Mrs. Levins and Kennie openedly longed for a chance to see and be seen and to view the latest styles of women's wear. Jack packed the sixshooter and belt of cartridges where ever he went, although grumbling at their weight.

"Lay them aside," suggested Mrs. Levins.

"And then that snake in the grass will get the drop on me," was the protest.

"He won't come back," declared Mrs. Levins.

"Maybe not," was Jacks reply, "but he certainly meant to do so when he went away, or I am a fool. It isn't fair anyway. Here he can come back any day that he wants to do so and I've got to be ready all of the time or he will take me unawares. I wish that some one would kill him".

"What makes you talk so?" reproved Mrs. Levins.

"Because he wont be good until he is dead," was the emphatic reply. "He could look the meanest out of the corner of his eye of any one that I ever saw. The old flannel-mouth! He looked just as though his mouth had been bored with a two inch auger and badly torn in the operation. If I ever get a chance at him again, if he ever tries to do me, I'll—"

"What makes you so harsh?" interrupted Mrs. Lewis reprovingly. "I used to think that I had one good-natured son."

"Just happen to feel that way, I guess," muttered Jack. "That fellow made me feel like the devil."

"How do you know how the devil feels?" asked Ralph perty. But Jack deigned no answer and strode off to the wheat field to turn the water on to it.

Ralph went to look up the cows and Mr. Levin began work on a small building to shelter the horses.

Ralph, returning in the evening about sundown, was attracted by a commotion among some hens that had been foraging behind a great oblong rock with its base worn away on every side by the sand drifted by the winds, as is common in Arizona. Seizing some smooth, nearly round pebbles, he dashed over to the rock, which was about one hundred and fifty feet from the tent, and rushed around the corner of the rock in great haste. He immediately found himself face to face with a big gray cat which he intuitively recognized as a wild-cat. The creature was devouring a hen which it had killed and 64 warned Ralph in unmistakable language to begone or something serious would happen. Ralph took the *hint* and rushed away for the tent at a greater rate of speed than that exhibited when coming to find out what the matter might be. Jack, coming from ~~the tent,~~ his work, met him at the corner of the tent.

"What is the rush?" demanded Jack. "Why are you running so fast?"

"Oh," exclaimed Ralph breathlessly, and then stopped to think what to say. "I just happened to take that kind of a notion. If you will go over there and take a peep around the corner of the Big Rock, you will see something pretty," he added, trying to appear unconcerned and calm.

Jack, with a questioning and distrustful glance at his brother took his way to the Big Rock. He cautiously drew the six shooter, the one taken from the claimjumper, before he peered around the rock. The wild-cat had retreated to a distance from the place where Ralph had seen it, but was plainly visible.

Jack took careful aim and the bullett passed through the animals body. After a few spasmodic leaps and bounds, it lay still in death.

"If some people can eat crow and 'possum, I can eat a hen that has been beheaded by a wildcat," said Jack aloud as he picked up the unfortunate biddy and gazed at her reflectively. "Grub is beginning to get a little scarce in Eden anyhow. That patch of wheat had better get a move on itself or we will have to pare down somebody's appetite. One thing, we will ~~soon~~ have both milk ~~mes~~ and eggs and those things are hard to beat."

"Chicken for supper, and cat for breakfast," he announced as he entered the tent.

"We will take the chicken and you may have the cat," said Mrs. Levin. "Is that a fair division?"

"That depends upon the way that you take ~~make~~

the view," said Jack cautiously.

"I don't happen to be a Chinaman, only a bird of Eden's sandy bowers, so I might not consider cat superior to jack rabbit."

"I know what," declared Ralph enthusiastically. "I'll make a little house up on top of the Big Rock and skunks, coyotes, and wildcats won't get the setting hens, I'll promise you."

"There will probably be something else to get them," said Mrs. Lewis in disgust.

"Well," began Ralph, "I'm not going to sit down and let things run over me. I'll try to do something anyway, and if I get beat, I'll—" here he paused trying to think of something suitable to say and Jack broke in with: "Run, of course. So would I.

"It is a good thing to do if your running gear is limber enough."

"I would like to know how we are ever to get the wheat threshed from the straw," said Jack as he sat in one corner of the tent that evening and pondered upon the ways and means of ranch affairs. "There are no threshing machines around here."

"Flail it out and winnow it in the wind," explained Mr. Levins. "We are doing things in the good old way that we hear about," he continued jokingly. "What was good enough for our forefathers ought to be good enough for us."

"I believe that I would rather have the hearsay part of it and not the actual experience," declared Jack. "It makes me feel as though I were about ten million miles neared being a cave dweller. I expect that a cycle of Cathay is all right if you are not of the hurrying kind. I am sure—"

At this juncture, Jennie, wildly excited, rushed into the tent and gasped: "That bad man! He is out behind the Big Rock. He has a gun!"

"In an instant, Jack's face flamed red with passion. Jerking the sixshooter from its leather case, he peered from the tent door, but could see nothing of the intruder.

"Look out, or he will shoot you!" warned Mrs. Levin "come back quick!'"

"Yes *I will*," snorted Jack as he sprang away and raced madly in the direction of the Big Rock. Peering cautiously around the corner of the rock, he caught a glimpse of the claim-jumper as he disappeared behind the Butte. Jack darted away in hot pursuit, but the fugitive had a less distance to go to gain the shelter of a cedar thicket than Jack had to go to reach the angle of the butte around which the fleeing man had disappeared. He was just in time to catch a glimpse of his back as he disappeared among the cedars. Jack sent a bullet after the fleeing man and again sprang away in pursuit. The chase was vain. The earth and sand were of such character that footprints were not discernable, and Jack returned to the tent irritable and surly.

"What makes you so fiendish?" demanded Mrs. Levine. "You are not a ruffian or a desperado."

"Maybe not," remarked Jack, "but that beast makes me feel as though I didn't care what happened. Didn't I say that he would come back? And he will come again, too. And mark my word, some one will get hurt before this show is over.

"You ought to swear out a warrant for that man and send the sherif after him," said Mrs. Levine to her husband.

"I guess that Jack has scared him out of a year's growth this time," said Mr. Levins soberly. "He does not seem to be very dangerous. I hate to call for help at everything." Besides, it is so far," he continued deprecatingly, "what shall we do, Jack?"

"Just let him try it again," growled Jack vengefully. "I'd like to get a good look at him once more."

"Say, papa, what are such people made for?" demanded Ralph.

"I am sure that I do not know," 66 admitted Mr. Levins. "Unless it is to keep the rest of us wide awake."

"I can't see that we are accomplishing much here so far," ventured Mamie.

"You would find

out that there was something being done if you got out into the fields now and then," said Jack.

"There is no money coming in," objected Mamie.

"Nor won't be for a while yet," remarked Jack. "The starting time is the hard part of the job, and it takes time to do that.

And besides, we haven't money enough to get the things needed. We ought to have a drove of sheep and there isn't a dollar to spare for sheep. It seems queer that some people can have their millions of dollars and others can hardly have so much as cents."

"Better be lacking in ~~cen~~ c-e-n-t-s than in the other kind," remarked Mr. Lewis. "We are all alive. We are living at any rate."

"Living, just living," said Mrs. Levine.

"Oh, this is good enough for me," declared Jack. "A fellow does not mind the lack of neighbors so long as he is busy."

"I am doing fine," declared Ralph.

"Me, too," said Jennie. "If there are no little neighbor girls about, I will not quarrel with them."

"Then you will miss the spice of life," declared Jack with a wink. "I would just as soon quarrel a little as not if I could only find some one my own size."

"That hard case that has been trying to chase us out of here isn't your size," declared Ralph.

"I know it," admitted Jack, "but I would make mincemeat out of him in a jiffy if none of you tenderfeet were around to object," he continued, his eyes gleaming fiercely. "I tell you what, I am going down to Holbrook pretty soon and get that Winchester of Mr. Borden. He told me that he would loan it to me until I got a gun of my own. This sixshooter doesn't carry far enough for my notion. I would like a taste of Antelope steak, and that hangs to high to be picked off with such a short-barreled gun as this."

Jack had other ideas as to the use of a rifle, but was careful not to let the rest of the family know his intention. The tales of indian raiders, of the doings of desperados, and the experience gained by the visits of the claimjumper served to make him restless and ill-at-ease without the proximity of a good grade of firearms. At first, the touch of the sixshooter had served to make him feel fearless and equal to any occasion, but the feeling gradually grew upon him that he must have something better near at hand or his own safety and that of the balance of the family was not secure. Unlike his father, Jack was restless and unsettled if not busy, possessing a certain insistent activity and energy that could brook no idleness. To think was to act, and he was soon on his way to Holbrook with the team and wagon, while there he secured some broad tires from a broken down wagon, a cast aside brace, two new drills, and some old iron, and some belting. Of course he did not forget to call for the mail, but kept away from Zuck's, fearing a jest about the candy dish. He also got some groceries, the rifle of Mr. Borden and a supply of ammunition for the same.

"Upon his return, he began work upon a "threshing machine", as he called it. The threshing machine consisted of a wooden cylinder and wooden concaves with wooden teeth. The wagon tires were converted into a wheel about fifteen feet in diameter with wooden cross pieces securely fastened to the inner side of the rim to serve as steps on which to place the feet. Jack's weight served to furnish the power to drive the "threshing machine and the power was transmitted by means of the belting running over the big wheel as a pulley and over a small pulley at one end of the cylinder.

The machine did the separating part all right, but Jack came to grief at the beginning of the first trial. Everything started out just as expected, but Mr. Levins, who was doing the feeding, stopped his part of the job to wait for Ralph to shake up the threshed straw and throw it out of the way. Relieved of the resistance, the big wheel turned so much more swiftly than Jack could step that he was thrown violently to the ground.

"I'll stop that kind of nonsense," he declared as he brushed the dirt from his clothing. "As things are now, this Jack must have just so much to do or he will run away. I'll fix a good stopping place before we shy off again and "something serious happens."

Planting two stout cedar poles close to the big pulley, he rigged a good sized sapling to them in such a way that he could use it as a breake on the big wheel if necessary. He also fastened a cross bar to the upright cedars at such a height that he could step onto it handily.

"My son John will get to be an inventor yet and run opposition to the J. I. Case manufacturing company," declared Mrs. Levins with a smile.

"We will call that rig the J. I. C.," said Mamie and then she laughed merrily at her own remark.

"Better call it the Hard Times Hummer," remarked Mrs. Levins as she stood beside the "machine" and examined it carefully.

"Better call it all mouth and no body," grumbled Ralph, who was disgusted with the task of getting rid of the straw.

"I guess that Ralph would rather flail the grain out with a club," said Jack with a grin

"I don't want to use a club on a skunk anyhow," said Ralph pointedly.

"Jack is doing some more inventing," declared Ralph as he entered the tent soon afterward.

"What now?" asked Mrs. Levins.

"Oh," replied Ralph, "there was a big hook among that lot of old iron that he brought home from Holbrook and he has put it into one of the timbers of the cabin ceiling. He wouldn't tell me what for. He just said that I could guess until my guesser got tired. 68

"What are you trying to do now," inquired Mrs. Levins when Jack came in to eat his dinner.

"Why? What?" demanded Jack innocently.

"Why"! That hook in the ceiling of the cabin," persisted Mrs Levins. "What is that for?"

"That? I am going to hang my game there in the future. You can't begin to imagine what odd, queer, strange and curious mammalians will suspend therefrom." Jack would have been very much astonished himself if he could have know himself at that particular moment.

Jack was very eager to kill his first antelope, but the pretty creatures were shy and seemed to avoid "Eden" pretty nearly all together. He made up his mind that he must secure one and so, soon after the wheat was safely housed in a new granary, he took a supply of "grub", the rifle, a belt of ammunition, and rode one of the horses away into the wilderness in the direction of the Mogollon Mountains.

"This is Sir Lochinvar of ye olden day. So long, all ye Edenites," he shouted as he took leave of the family group.

"You won't find any pretty girls off in that direction," declared Ralph teasingly.

"Hope I won't need to take a gun along when I go hunting pretty girls," remarked Jack with a merry laugh. "Watch out for that claim jumper while I am gone."

"He won't ~~come~~ come back," said Mr. Levins. "You scared him nearly or quite to death the last time that he was here."

W,

"Don't fool yourself," said Jack with a shake of his head. "Good by all and take care of yourselves. I won't be gone more than two days."

"Do be careful," warned Miss. Levins.

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XII.

Jack and Himself.

Through sage brush and cedars, mile after mile through an unknown country Jack picked his way. Although watching carefully, he failed to catch sight of an antelope. He whiled away the time by whispering to himself remarks and questions, and then answering in a different tone of voice as though a different person was sharing in the conversation.

He paused near sundown of the first day.

"Have you seen any antelope?" demanded Jack of Himself.

"Not one," replied Himself. "You are so big that they see you before you come in sight and run off and hide in the brush."

"If you would just tell the bare truth, you would stand a better chance to get to heaven," declared Jack to Himself.

"What do you know about heaven?" growled Himself to Jack. "I wouldn't dare place the bare truth on exhibition anyway. I am no hardened sinner like you."

"If you will just come ober by that rock, we will have an understanding about this matter," declared Jack to himself.

"All right, and I'll make you eat your words," said Himself to Jack threateningly.

"It is hard to tell what would have happened between Jack and Himself, but as Jack and Himself sat on the horse gazing about before dismounting a harsh voice close beside them called out:

"Throw up your hands!"

Jack and Himself were so startled that they nearly fell from the horse and so stricken dumb that they never thought to raise their hands at all until the command was repeated in no uncertain tones.

"Well," gasped Jack as he found himself staring at the muzzle of a repeating rifle and began to recover his senses. Himself was stricken dumb and Jack did all of the talking now. "Is that the way that you say how-do-do in this country?"

"You bet," was the laconic answer. "What are you doing in these parts?"

"Doing" remarked Jack dryly. "I am holding my hands high up in space to please the notion of an esteemed stranger."

"I mean what is your business here," was the impatient explanation.

"Oh," exclaimed Jack pleasantly. "I am trying hard to please the man who looks and acts as though he would like to make a fair looking seive out of me. He would only be wasting amminition though."

"Oh, now I know what you want," added Jack hastily, alarmed by the stranger's evident anger. "You see, it is this way. I and my folks have taken up a claim off back there (nodding his head in the wrong direction) and I am just a dumb fool tenderfoot out looking for an antylope, hoping to scare it to death with a chunk of lead. You are the first uncle-ope I've found and I am much surprised as I never expected to see such a looking uncle as you in these parts."

"What is the matter with you?" demanded the stranger. "Are you locoed or were you born foolish?"

"Neither one," declared Jack stoutly. "I am not used to this kind of a position and it makes me stiff all over, even my talking arrangement, I am to tender for this kind of exercise."

"Do you know

Ben Crow?" demanded the stranger suspiciously.

"No, I don't," declared Jack. "Nor Jim Crow either. I never had an introduction to any of the Crow family in my life."

"Does your mother know that you are out?" demanded the stranger, relaxing.

"Yes," was the reply, "but she said that I must be careful."

"*She* ought to tie you to her apron strings," was the remark of the stranger as he lowered the muzzle of his rifle. "You are not safe away from her protecting care."

"Gee! but that is a hard way to earn a living," said Jack with a sigh of relief as he dropped his hands to his sides and regarded the stranger inquiringly.

"Run along home now like a good boy and don't come back in these parts again or you might wish that you hadn't. _Save_?" admonished the stranger.

"Yah, Yah," exclaimed Jack earnestly. "I _save_, ish ferstay und I tumble; but you needn't get scared. I wouldn't hurt you if I had a chance. I am not the least bit dangerous. I would hardly hurt a fly if it should crawl into my mouth on a hot day. I—" Jack was about to add a few more loquacious protestations when he suddenly remembered his fierce chase after the claim jumper, and stopped embarrassed, which fact was noticed by the stranger and no very favorable impression made.

"These flabby youngsters aren't usually much good," he remarked. "They are apt to be fine to your face and dirty when your back is turned. Move along now and don't come monkeying around here again."

"I am very much obliged, seeing that you are no harder on me," said Jack over his shoulder as he rode away. "I'll do as much for you some day," he continued in a bantering tone.

"Quite an experience," remarked Jack to himself as he rode along. "It might have been worse though."

"You will get your fool neck cracked one of these days while trying to be funny," warned Himself in a deep bass rumble.

"Something ought to happen to you to take some of the conceit out of you."

"If I should get killed," said Jack to Himself, "I wouldn't be compelled to keep company with such an ornery galoot as yourself, that is one consolation."

"You ought to have refused to throw up your hands when the man with the Gun told you to do so," snarled Himself in a huff.

"I am sure that I am deserving of more civilized company than you. There! it is getting dark and you haven't sense enough to stop and go into camp while you can see. I can't imagine what would become of you if I were not along to take care of you."

"Oh shucks! exclaimed Jack. "You can't take care of yourself let alone an entertaining young gent like me."

"Gent!" That is just it. You are only the lesser part of a gentleman, and can't learn how to be the whole thing," declared Himself with a deep-down rumble that sounded like distant thunder.

Jack set a fire at the base of a thorny tree about fifteen feet in height, ~~the~~ tethered the horse in a grassy place, ate some bread and cottontail (toasted over the fire), then after a swallow of cold tea from a canteen which Jack carried, rolled up in a blanket and were soon sound asleep.

"The fire burned cosily, shedding a subdued radience for many feet about. The horse nibbled off the grass within reach and lay down to rest. Jack began to dream.

At first, a dim unremembered fantasy. Then a more delible impress was printed upon the memory and Jack was with a force of soldiers hunting for raiding Apaches.

"We can never catch them if you do not help us", declared the commander of the force to Jack very earnestly. And Jack, in after waking moments, wondered how ~~it~~ he happened to get to be so important and why he should happen to dream of such doings.

The search continued and Jack, to his dismay, became separated from his companions.

A host of warriors rose up suddenly all about him and as one person thrust their spears into him.

They did not use firearms for fear of attracting the attention of the soldiers, so Jack imagined. At this juncture, Jack was so frightened that he sprang to his feet without being fully awake and rushed madly away only to fall headlong over the reclining horse. The horse got up with a snort of disgust and Jack came to his senses and took a survey of things. The thorny tree had burned through at the base and fallen upon him as he slept. The thorns had done the spear part in good shape and several of them were sticking in his flesh, causing a severe smarting sensation not pleasant to endure.

"Another narrow escape", remarked Jack to Himself.

"It might have been worse," croaked Himself.

"I wish that you had a few of those thorns stuck into you," remarked Jack. "Then maybe you would have something to grumble about."

"I got my growl from you", declared Himself.

"If you did, you have exagerated it a whole lot," retorted Jack.

"I cant exagerate any more than you do," declared Himself in a raucous bass that almost made Jack's flesh tremble.

"Shut up, you dumb fool," admonished Jack.

"Shut up, you dumb fool echoed Himself.

Jack now quit disputing with Himself and lay for hours gazing up into the heavens, pondering and wondering, first upon one subject and then another, finally considering the lot of mankind.

Think as hard as he would, he could find no creature with which he was willing to trade conditions and modes of life.

"I have it," he cried estatically as the first streaks of dawn showed in the Eastern sky. "If a fellow's life is really in danger and he ~~is~~ stands a good chance to lose it, he is anxious to hold on to it and keep the same old grind a grinding. If his life is in no particular danger and he is in such a safe place that he has no chance to get a good scare now and then he will get tired of living and want to commit suicide just for a change. Queer old world this. I guess not half so queer though as the animiles that meander over its surface".

"O to be an antylope
And with the aunties lope.
Two spikes upon my old topnot
And a hairy coat upon my back",

he hummed after a few minutes thought, "I believe that I would make a poet-laureate all right if it wasn't for the rhyming. That is to much bother. I don't know though as it is any worse than hunting all day for an antelope and not even seeing one, or going to sleep and getting stuck by about seventeen thousand thorns and imagining that a lot of wild Apaches are after me."

"Better get up and be moving," growled Himself.

"Get up yourself", retorted Jack. "I'm not your nigger".

But Jack did arise, and after a hasty breakfast, continued his search for an antelope.

He sighted a very small deer high up among some rocks about the middle of the forenoon. Hastily tying his horse to a cedar, he crept stealthily forward, but the pretty creature scented him and before he could shoot, disappeared behind a rock at a single bound.

"I'll have that fellow," declared Jack to himself with dogged determination as he sprang nimbly from rock to rock and clambered upward over ledge after ledge. The little fellow scurried from shelter to shelter and it was nearly noon before Jack got a chance at him. Then it was only crippled and led its pursuer a trying chase through thickets and canons until both were nearly spent with the exertion of the chase. Jack fired at it once more as it was ascending a steep pitch. It leaped spasmodically forward, came in violent contact with a sapling and was thrown backward down the incline.

"Poor little fellow," muttered Jack as he stood gazing down upon his victim. "You were to pretty to kill. No use to cry now though. That is the way it goes.

Hog eat hog. Dog eat dog, and a mighty poor chance for the weakling, I'll just get rid of the entrails and take the rest home. I guess that Jim can carry both of us without any trouble".

Jack drew forth his knife and began work with an earnestness that did him credit, but with a bungling that betrayed the amateur. He had not more than half done when the footstep of a horse but a few feet distant startled him so much that he dropped his knife. Looking quickly up, he beheld four indians riding "indian file" past him. At first a panic seized upon him, althrough he moved not a muscle, then anger at his own nervousness, and he sat upon his feet, staring through half-closed eyelids at the swarthy quartet as the rode silently by with scarcely a glance in his direction.

"You will get scalped yet and never know it," remarked Jack to Himself.

"Better get a pair of specs and a new pair of ears," warned Himself in a rumbling bass.

"If there is anything in size I can't match what I now have," said Jack. "They beat Abraham Lincoln all out."

"They aren't much good," asserted Himself. "Where is your horse?"

"Hang me if I know," declared Jack in puzzled consternation. "It is somewhere on earth, I am sure, but when it comes to directions, I am pretty badly lost."

"You ought to have your head knocked against a stone. You don't know a little bit."

"I know enough so that I can do something beside growl," asserted Jack. "I never saw you do anything in my life. Just growl and grumble and try to talk away down in the bottom of your boots. If you are so terrible smart, just show me where that horse is."

"Just climb up to the top of that tree and maybe you can see the top of the Butte."

suggested Himself.

"That Butte isn't a horse," declared Jack. "I couldn't ride home on it if I could find it."

"You could fly through, if you were as smart as you think you are", declared Himself.

"Which way is that horse?" asked Jack of himself in perplexity and forgot in his perturbation to make a remark and attribute it to a *fanciful* personage. Carefully and cautiously, he picked his way among half-forgotten, and sometimes wholly forgotten, landmarks which he had passed while in pursuit of the little deer. Sundown found him standing bewildered and perplexed in in a locality that he firmly believed to be the place where he had left the horse, but no horse was to be seen. So exhausted that he could hardly move, he dropped the deer to the ground and sank down to rest and to think. Hiding his face in his hands, he strove to clearly place a remembrance of the place where he had left the horse.

Uncovering his face, he glanced about. Yes, this was the place.

Over there to the right was the cedar with the broken top. Far off to the left was the lightning riven pine, and near by was the pedestal-like rock. "There it is," he exclaimed as he recognized the scraggy cedar to which he had tied the horse. "But where is the horse?"

Rising, he walked to the tree

and examined the ground. Plenty of hoofprints were to be seen, but it was evident that the horse had been gone for hours. "That rotten claimjumper," he exclaimed in a rage. "I would like to settle with him!" Then stooping down, he examined the ground carefully but could find find no trace of a human footprint not his own.

"Maybe I didn't tie him securely and he has gone home," he muttered. "If that is the case, I deserve to tramp sand for forty miles. I'll not do any of it to-night though. Blanket gone! Oh well, I'll get along."

"There!" he exclaimed as he finished tying the deer in a walnut tree about fifteen feet from the ground. "I hope that you don't get loose and run off, too. Now for a fire, some supper and a snooze before something else funny happens." Cutting some choice pieces from the deer, he slid to the ground and soon deer meat was being broiled over a brisk fire. Nodding and blinking, he gorged himself until, dazed and dumb-headed, he lolled over beside the fire with one hand on his gun and slept the sleep of utter exhaustion.

The night was very calm and still and sound carried for long distances. About two o'clock in the morning, a queer, ill-defined sound disturbed Jack's slumber and he began to dream that his mother was tearing his best shirt into strips for carpet rags.

He began to protest, in his dream, and then awoke with a start. Some heavy body was climbing the walnut tree and was very near to the carcass of the deer, its claws making a tearing, ripping sound against the bark of the tree. For a few seconds, Jack gazed stupidly upward at the dim outlines of the creature which, about forty feet away, showed very indistinctly in the gloom of the starlight. Then raising his gun, he aimed and fired. The creature clawed the tree violently; then dropped to the ground and scampered away among the cedars.

"Gee whiz," exclaimed Jack aloud. "What in Sam Hill and a thousand acres of cedar brush was that thing!

"Whew, it must be cold," he continued as his teeth began to chatter, more from excitement and nervousness than from cold. Nearly recovering his usual spirits, he said to Himself banteringly. "I just expect that you will get chewed up alive before you get back home."

"Maybe you will," ~~he~~ retorted Himself in a guttural bass after a moment's pause. "And it would you serve you right, too. Any poor imitation of a man that would go chasing around two or three days in the brush just to kill a fifty pound deer instead of staying at home and taking care of things, ought to be paralyzed by a grizzly bear or a mountain lion."

"That's it, old spite,"

replied Jack. "Say something mean if you can. It is all that you are good for anyway."

"Birds of a feather will flock to-gether," jibed himself in a rumbling grumble that surprised Jack so much that he laughed aloud. "I didn't know that I could do so well," he assured himself. "I must try my powers on the folks at home as soon as I get a chance. Won't they open their eyes though.

"Say, old man," he continued addressing himself, "you put me in mind of a little fox pup without its eyes open that I once saw. Shake it a little and it would deliver a bigger growl than a fifty pound bulldog could manufacture. A pint of fox pup with a growl big enough to swallow a cow whole, as it were. Ha, ha, ha."

"Oh, give us a rest," grumbled Himself. But this effort did not come up to expectation. Jack's nervousness had subsided and it took a considerable effort to produce the tone and volume desired. "Just wait until you find out which way home is," mumbled Himself warningly. "That will take some of the fooling out of you."

"If that don't, the getting there will," said Jack thoughtfully.

Jack did not intend to sleep any more that night, but along toward morning he dozed off and did not again awaken until the sun was shining brightly.

"Well, well, well," he exclaimed. "If that green old ~~gosln~~ gosling of a sun didn't get out of bed on the West side of heaven this morning. I'll be glad when I get back home so that I will know whether I want breakfast or supper.

Maybe it is evening," he continued doubtingly, "and I have been asleep all day. I know: I'll just climb that pine tree out there on the hill and look about."

Jack climbed ~~that~~ The tree in question as quickly as possible and carefully examined the country in the direction in which he thought the home butte must be, but could see nothing familiar—just a stretch of wilderness, a panorama of solitude.

"Goodness me!" he exclaimed in alarm, unconsciously using his mother's favorite ejaculation. If there are any direction in this locality, they must be hiding in the brush some where. I can't find them, anyway. Let us look everywhich way," he said turning slowly about and examining the landscape for far and near. "There," he exclaimed excitedly, "if that isn't the Bald top of our butte—I am a wild Navaho at roost in a pine-apple tree. That is it sure, but I don't know how it got off in that direction. Just be careful now and go right there and you will find some folks that think that you have been gobbled by something before this. I wonder if that fool horse got home."

"My, but I am hungry," declared Jack as he slid down the trunk of the tree. Bread all gone and tea all gone. Deer, just deer, for breakfast. If you don't hurry home, you won't have any deer left. It takes a pile to fill that mammoth cave number two so that there won't be an aching vacuum."

Jack managed to reach home as the sun was disappearing in the West. Lying down full length at the spring at the butte, he drank greedily of the fresh, pure water and felt much refreshed. The horse was in the corral. He approached the cabin from the farther side so that no one at the tent could see him.

Opening a window, he entered and hung his game on the hook which he had fastened to the ceiling.

"Moo-oo-o, boo-oo-o," he bellowed in the deepest, harshest base that he could command. "Boo-ooo-oo-o." The family rushed out-of-doors, Mr. Levine with the shotgun in his hand was in the lead.

"Boo-oo-o, Moo-oo-o" bellowed Jack as the family stood gazing in dumbfounded astonishment in the direction of the cabin.

"Huh," growled Ralph. "That's Jack."

"How do you know?" demanded Mrs. Levine.

"I have heard him make that kind of a noise before. The poor fool practices that when he is off by himself," declared Ralph scornfully.

"Jack," called Mr. Levins commandingly.

"Yes sir," answered Jack meekly. "Anything wanted?"

"Come out here," said Mr. Levins.

"Did you make that noise?" demanded Jennie.

"No," said Jack as he caught up his sister and kissed her heartily. "That was the other fellow. He is a bad egg. I don't like to keep company with such as he but I am afraid of hurting his feelings should I send him about his business.

"I don't really think there is any danger of him spoiling me though. I have to strong a mind of my own," concluded Jack with a grin.

"Maybe the quality isn't just A. number one", remarked Ralph.

"What was Ralph Trying to tell you about my practice awhile ago," demanded Jack.

"He said that you practiced making that kind of a noise," explained Mamie.

"How do you know? When did you hear me?" demanded Jack, rather taken aback.

"Oh, you were down by the butte irrigating the wheat. I was out by the cabin when I heard you. You made such an awful noise that I thought some one was murdering you and I ran down to the Big Rock as fast as I could, but could see no one near you and you were working away as busy as could be. First you would speak with that awful roar and then answer with so sweet a voice that I was surprised."

"What did he say", asked Mamie eagerly.

"Oh", said Ralph with a grin as Jack hung his head in embarrassment. "I can't just remember, but he was coaxing some one to marry him and she wouldn't because he had such big feet."

This was too much for the gravity of the family and they all laughed heartily. Jack joined in with his best roar to hide his embarrassment.

"You had better write out a nice little piece, a poem perhaps, to have ready for the occasion, and then maybe she will forget about the feet," advised Mr. Levins.

"I'll do it," declared Jack. "Come see my game. It is a beauty.

"I didnt know that there was anything like that in this country," said Mr. Levins. It seems to bad to kill anything as nice as that."

"Now," remarked Jack. "I would like some supper. I feel just as though I were ready to tumble right into that empty place of mine and disappear forevermore".

Chap. 78

VIII.

Jack gets Acquainted with cowboys.

"O say, Jack," said Mamie the next morning before breakfast.

"Say it yourself," retorted Jack.

"Have you got that poem done yet?"

"No, I haven't," was the reply. "It will take me three or four days to get that old thinking machine of mine geared up to the right pitch before I can even begin."

"You are awful slow," said Mamie.

"Do it yourself then," was the bantering remark.

"I never made

any promises," averred Mamie with a shake of the head. "I can wash dishes easier."

"And I can hoe corn easier," said Jack. "I can tell you what is the matter, you intend to steal my patent and then lend it to *him* so that he can practice it on *you*. Of course he wouldn't know enough to manufacture anything of the kind himself."

"You don't catch me being any man's dishwasher," said Mamie scornfully.

"You wash dishes for I and father," declared Jack tauntingly.

"Oh, well, that is different," said Mamie. "It is my duty to work for my father, and my brother as well. As for you, you are a sort of a necessary evil."

"That is a good job," remarked Jack with a shrug.

"Such high-toned women usually get badly fooled when they do begin the dishwashing job."

"I am going down to Holbrook to-day," said Mr. Levins. "I and mother will go and the rest of you can stay here and make yourselves useful."

"All right," said Jack. "I guess that I can stand it if Mame will only wash the dishes real clean. Don't forget a box of cartridges for my six shooter. I want to be ready for business if that galoot should come back and try to monkey with this bandwagon."

"I don't think that he will ever come back," said Mr. Levins.

"I guess that you mean that you hope that he won't," ventured Jack. Mr. Levins did not answer and soon the parents were mounted ~~in~~ on the seat of the wagon and on their way to town.

Jack had become careless and seldom glanced about him while at work as had been his custom for a time after the visits of the claimjumper. Along about three o'clock in the afternoon, he was startled by a strange voice near him exclaiming: "Great Scott, what do you call that?"

Looking up quickly, he beheld two cowboys seated on their ponies gazing fixedly at him.

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"That!" exclaimed the cowboy spoken to, "That must be Barnum's What Is It. But how did it ever get out in this country," he continued as if much puzzled.

"It must have broken loose and run away," declared the first speaker. "Just look at the feet. And the length of the 'baste.'"

"Pretty nearly six feet and a half, I should judge," said cowboy ~~number~~ two. "We ought to cage that fellow. He is apt to trample down all of the brush in Arizona."

"I don't believe that my lariat would hold the critter," said cowboy number one doubtfully. "He looks tougher than a six year old maverick."

Jack overheard every word that was said, but did not for a moment believe that he would be interfered with. It pleased his vanity to find that he attracted so much notice, and he unthinkingly turned his back while at work to laugh silently to himself.

A rope dropped down over his arms and shoulders. He realized in the fraction of a second his peril and by a desperate effort freed his arms from the clasp of the loop's encircling grasp. It was jerked tight about his waist and he was jerked violently from his feet and dragged bodily ~~violently~~ along behind a bucking, plunging broncho.

The cowboy had trained his pony to show off before a crowd and to perform various stunts. That training proved the cowboys undoing on this particular occasion. The pony ceased its onward flight and began to jump stiff-legged and to rear up on its hind legs. Jack scrambled to his feet, seized hold of the rope, and with a mighty tug, toppled pony and rider over backward. Slipping the noose up over his head, he darted swiftly away to where his coat and sixshooter lay with the other cowboy in close pursuit. Jack watched the cowboy out of the corner of his eye without the cowboy noticing that he did so. When close enough, the cowboy swung the lariat around his head and attempted to catch Jack by the foot as he ran. Jack stopped suddenly and stood still. The noose struck against his leg and fell to the ground and then Jack reached his six-shooter almost with a bound. Snatching it up, he aimed it at the astonished cowboy and said as quietly as his heavy ~~breath~~ breathing would allow: "you had better vamoose the ranch now."

"You bet," was the laconic reply. The cowboy wheeled his pony about, and being joined by his comrade, both put spurs to their ponies and went galloping across the field, over the fence and across the mesa, whooping and firing their sixshooters.

"Another narrow escape," remarked Jack to Himself. "I wonder what they would have done with me anyhow?"

"It is hard to tell," said Himself with a deep-down rumble. "Your show-ring proportions will get you into trouble yet. You ought to have had better sense than to try to get to be six feet six."

"Six feet and nearly six inches and two hundred pounds ~~or~~ 80 more of the real stuff comes in pretty handy when it comes to upsetting cowboys and ~~bronchos~~ broncos," remarked Jack with a self-satisfied grin.

"You may grin out of the other corner of your mouth before you get through with those fellows," warned Himself ~~darkly~~ darkly.

Jack was much pleased with the outcome of his adventure and smiled broadly and, figuratively speaking, patted himself on the back as he related to his brother and sisters at supper time how he had defeated two armed and mounted cowboys that afternoon. The young folks stood in awe of cowboys with their array of guns and strange trappings, but cowboy stock took a panicky tumble in the estimation of the youngsters and was far below par at seven o'clock. Cowboy stock, however, took a considerable rise before midnight.

"I am going to roost out under the Big Pine," declared Jack. "If my feet should get nervous when I am asleep out there, they won't be apt to batter anything very tender, unless it is the tree, and I guess that it can stand the racket."

"Better wait until father comes back," counseled Mamie.

"You will be all right," declared Jack. "Nothing worse than bedbugs were ever known to enter this tent."

"There are some of them," agreed Mamie discontentedly.

"Something might pack you off," warned Jennie earnestly.

"That something will surely drop me when daylight comes," said Jack with a good-natured laugh.

"I know," said Mamie. "Jack thinks that it will brighten up his wits to sleep out doors so that he can do extra fine when he composes that love song."

"That is just it," declared Jack. "I am no fool if I do act queer sometimes. So here goes," he continued as he picked up a pair of blankets and strolled over to the Big Pine. The mellow glow of the evening flooded the landscape, Jack was well pleased with everything on this particular evening and hummed a cheerful tune as he arranged his blankets.

Laying his six shooter by his side, he stretched his massive limbs in animal-like content and was soon fast asleep, little dreaming that the owners of more than one pair of eyes, screened by a bunch of cedars, were expressing their satisfaction with the state of affairs in hilarious pantomime.

"The roosters of "Eden" had not long since voiced their nine o'clock crowing when six shadowy figures crept cautiously toward the sleeper. Quietly and slowly, as a tiger stalks its prey, they moved forward. Two seized Jack's hands, two his feet, while the fifth gagged him with a piece of blanket. The sixth cowboy bound his arms behind his back with a lariat.

"Get up and walk," said one in a subdued tone of voice.

Jack obeyed, but with his customary perversity, started in the direction of the tent.

"Not that way," said the cowboy that held the lariat, giving a violent jerk.

"Go ahead Jim," he continued to one of the others. "Now, my gay young rooster, just follow that fellow and you will save a pile of trouble."

Jack obeyed. He could not use his tongue, so he cast about in his "thinking machine" for other ways to make himself interesting. He walked swiftly until close at the heels of his guide. His foot struck against a fallen limb before they had gone far and he lurched violently forward against the cowboy and sent him sprawling on the ground. The cowboy arose with an angry oath.

"I guess that the poor fool stubbed his toe against a rock," said one.

"I don't care if he did," grumbled the one who had the tumble. "I don't like being bumped over by an elephant."

"How far shall we

take him," said one.

"Oh, a couple of miles," suggested the one spoken to.

"He has an awful voice," remarked another, "and we will need to go a good ways or they will hear him yell at the tent."

"Keep him gagged," said another.

"That would spoil half the fun," was the answer. "I want to hear him bellow."

Just at this point, Jack began to reel and stagger as if weak and growing worse rapidly.

"Walk straight, you fol," said the man with the hold on the lariat.

Jack's reply

was a more violent lurch than usual and a tumble face downward on the ground where he lay inert and as if lifeless.

"Get up," commanded one of the cowboys. But Jack gave no sign.

"Maybe he is dead," suggested one.

"No danger," declared another.

He is playing possum," declared the fourth cowboy.

"Let us carry him," said the cowboy with the lariat.

And not knowing what else to do, each of the six seized upon some part of Jack's person, and with various expressions of disgust, began carrying their captive.

Had Jack kept

quiet, matters would have gone much better with him but he could not refrain from doing something. His captors had carried him perhaps a hundred yards when he gave vent to an awful, muffled groan, straightening out his erstwhile limp body with such a spasmodic jerk that most of the cowboys were sent staggering away from him and he was dropped with a thud on the ground where he lay as if lifeless.

"Hell!" remarked one.

He is playing us for fools," declared another.

"I came for fun," remarked a third, "and not to pack a wild rhinoceros.

"Just wait until we get him where those youngsters

won't hear him howl," remarked a fourth. "We will take some of the kinks out of him."
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"I'll bring him to life," said the fifth cowboy. Disengaging a large blanket pin from his clothing, he freed the point from its sheath and jabbed it deep into Jack's flesh.

Jack came to life in a hurry. Struggling quickly to his feet, he aimed a vicious kick at his tormentor. The kick did not land fairly, but the cowboy went down before it in a huddled heap and only escaped serious injury through the interference of the other cowboys who bore Jack to the ground by force of numbers.

"Do you see that?" demanded one of the cowboys, drawing a sixshooter and exhibiting it to Jack. "Just get up now and walk right along, or I will let a little starlight shine through you.

Jack concluded that he had better get up and walk, which he did without stagger or nonsense.

The cowboys now came to where they had tied their horses. "Tie that lariat to your saddle," said one of the cowboys, "and I'll bet a brass nickle that gay cock-a-doo-dle-do will follow without being packed. The party started off to the Eastward at a brisk pace, ignorant of the fact that a wild-eyed nemesis glided along unfalteringly behind them."

"This is far enough," said one of the party when

They had gotten about two miles and a half from the Levins tent.

"That is what I say," agreed another.

"He can bellow louder than any ten year old bull that you ever saw," cautioned a third.

"The wind blow the wrong way," said the first speaker. Tie him up to that cedar and let us have a bite to eat and a sway of the real stuff before we get down to business." And the band so agreed.

"We will make that gentle little lamb dance the best Highland fling," said one of the cowboys.

"To the tune of the bark of my good gun," said another. "What fun we will have!

"Zip, Yip, Rah."

"He must give us the latest Mormon ~~two-st~~ two-step," declared a third.

"And an Arizona jig," suggested a fourth.

"And a paddy-whack shindig. Rip, 'rah, 'rah," declared the fifth.

"We will give him something to kick about," declared the sixth, who happened to be the one that Jack had kicked.

"I would rather be kicked by two Missouri mules," he continued ruefully.

Better not drink to much or we will not be able to attend to that fellow to-night," cautioned one.

"Let us wait a

little while longer," protested one. "This stuff is to good to leave until I have had enough. That fellow can't get away."

"Come Jim, let us go see how he is getting along," said one of the party. Jim and his companion strolled over to where Jack reclined, bound securely to the cedar.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the cowboys in maudlin glee, all unconscious that a lithe figure lay concealed but a few feet away and that bright eyes behind gleaming ~~steel~~ steel noted their every move.

"We ought to attend to your case right now," declared one of the cowboys confidentially, "but I must have another swig. Another "swig" proved to be several, as they happened to have a plentiful supply of whiskey. Soon they were past "attending" to Jack's "case" and the huddled figure began to creep stealthily toward the captive.

Jack had tried to break the bonds that held him, and had tried to use his teeth on them, but to no purpose. He now lay thinking and wondering about the outcome of his misfortune and as to what his captors intended to do to him. That they pesented his ways and the defeat of two of their number, he knew very well.

Then he thought of his absent parents and of his brother and sisters. With a furious tug, he sought to free himself, but his bonds again proved to strong. He sank backward with a sigh and stared upward at a lone star glimmering in the firmament. A rustling sound smote his hearing and he started nervously. Surely something was cautiously approaching. Remembrance of tales about mountain lions flashed vividly through his brain and he hastily jumped to the conclusion that one was now creeping upon him. A mountain lion has about as many reputations as a cat is popularly supposed to have lives, and has been known to stalk human beings; hence Jack readily believed that he was about to become the victim of a big cat. His first impulse was to call to the cowboy as the lesser of two evils.

But they now lay in maudlin stupor and he grimly assured himself that he could get ahead of them in one way if not in another, even if it were with the assistance of a mountain lion.

The creeping something paused.

"You needn't bother to jump," assured Jack. "It might jar your carcass for you."

"Shut up," commanded the "lion"

"Oh, its Ralph!" gasped Jack faintly in surprise.

A pocket knife clicked as it was opened and in a few seconds Jack was free.

"Come, let us get out of here," whispered Ralph.

"Much obliged," was the subdued remark. "those fellows

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are dead drunk and I am going to have a little fun of my own now."

Walking carefully over to the cowboys he removed their guns from their belts and hung them in a cedar tree where they could be found in daylight. Then he took every lariat in the outfit and tied each cowboy separately, then together and finally to nearby cedars. There were knots of various kinds and a half hour's labor found the job complete.

When Jack had done, he took all knives and deposited them in a pile out of reach of the owners, remarking: "They can get loose now, but they will have to work for it.

There," he said, "these fellows will have something to think about beside snakes and crocodiles before they get loose. Let us go home now. How did you know what happened to me?"

"I got worried," said Ralph, "for fear that something would happen to you. I got up and went out to where you spread your blankets. You were gone but the blankets and six shooter were there and I heard voices in the distance. I thought of those cowboys you saw in the afternoon. I grabbed the six-shooter and followed as fast as I could until I got quite close to you."

"I thought that you were a mountain lion," remarked Jack.

"Then that is why you told me not to jump," said Ralph.

"I thought that a lion might needlessly jar its anatomy if it should take the trouble to give a big leap to catch something that could not get away."

"You mean that you thought that I was a lion but that something told you that I was not," remarked Ralph. "I guess that is the reason you didn't get worse scared."

XIV.

Recruits for Eden.

In the evening of the third day after Jack's experience with the cowboys, Mr. and Mrs. Levins drove up to the tent and Mamie, Jimmie and Ralph each tried to tell about Jack's adventure at one and the same time.

Jack kept still. He did not feel especially proud over his part in the affair and it irritated him to think of how easily the cowboys had taken him captive.

"Such a country" sighed Mrs. Levins. "And *such* people. I wish that we were well out of it."

"I don't see how

we can get out," said Mr. Levins dejectedly. "Unless we just hitch the horses to the wagon and run, leaving everything behind. I don't like to do that.

Besides, there are a great many hundred miles of desert to cross whichever way we may go — North, South, East or West." I almost believe that those cowboys meant to do Jack no serious harm — just mischievous pranks. We have our home here now and I believe that we will come out all right in the end. We have no other place that we can call home and we have done a lot of work here since we began."

"Well," declared Mrs.

Levins decidedly, "if you intend to stay here, you had better build a fort immediately and get a few cannon mounted at once. It does not seem as though a person is safe from harm here until he, or she, is dead and buried. I shouldn't be surprised if a band of Apaches tried scalping us any day."

"Oh, you are tired from the trip and everything looks black," said Mr. Levins. "Better go in and lie down and rest yourself for a while."

"Don't work your thinker to hard," said Mr. Levins to his wife, noting her abstraction, as they sat around the table partaking of an excellent supper that had been prepared by Mamie and Jennie.

I don't know where we will put them, if they do ~~come~~ come," said Mrs. Levins irritably.

"Oh, that is what is worrying you. Where there is a will there is generally a way," remarked Mr. Levins. "That cabin will soon be ready for occupancy and this tent will do first rate for me and the boys at any season of the year in this climate. You ladies can have an Arizona log mansion all to yourselves, and not be troubled by having any bothersome men folks around."

"I am afraid that something might pack you off if I were not around."

declared Mrs. Levins.

"What would you do if you were around when something tried to pack us off," asked Mr. Levins.

"I'd- I'd - screech," declared Mrs. Levins.

That would fix 'em", said Mr. Levins heartily. "They, it or what would never stop running should they once hear you screech. Ha, ha"

"Who is coming anyway?" asked Jack rousing from his sulky gloom. The more he thought about his capture, the more it angered him.

"I found a letter at the postoffice at Holbrook from an old friend of mine that I hadn't heard from in many years. She and a daughter are down at ~~P~~ Phoenix now. Her husband has died of mountain fever and she and her child are pretty hard up. She wrote to me to our old home back East and the letter was forwarded to Holbrook. She wants me to pay the railroad fare of herself and daughter back to the old home, promising to repay me as soon as possible. I don't see how I can though, as I ~~haven't~~ haven't cash enough to pay their way to the Arizona line at the regular rate of six cents per mile, let alone three thousand miles, more or less besides."

"Guess maybe you wouldn't get it back anyway", grumbled Ralph.

"Yes I would," declared Mr. Levins earnestly. "Mary Berry is as straight as a shingle, or anything else straight that I might compare her to. I would not bother myself about them, but the Berrys are nice people and good friends of mine."

"I expect that you are intending to turn Mormon and have that Mary Berry for number two," said Mrs. Levins tauntingly.

"Not by a long shot," declared Mr. Levins quickly. "She weighed about two hundred pounds the last time I saw her, about fifteen years ago, and I expect that she has been growing some since."

"Is she very tall?"

asked Mrs. Levins.

"Tall! Well no, she isn't; but she is all there just the same."

"What is she like? How does she behave herself?" asked Mrs. Levins. "Maybe she is an old flame of yours."

"Not a bit of it," was the prompt denial. "You are ~~the~~ the hottest flame that I ever fooled around." She behaves first rate. She is what she herself ~~call~~ calls a "plain-spoken person." She isn't a bit backward in telling you your faults to your face, and maybe a few that she imagines that you have with sundry warnings about a hot country, location unknown, that you will surely visit if you are not 'hawful' careful.

She can also make her H's sound almost any place but in the right one. For instance, she would be sure to say "hell" when she meant a cloth measure and she would say "ell" when she wanted to warn you of the perils that await the evildoer. Yes, she is cornish, from Lands End. She should have ~~been~~ been a preacher. As it is, she is a great shouter. I need her around to tell you youngsters how to behave yourselves."

"Huh!" growled Ralph. "There is more shout than we need around here now."

"Maybe she will get tired of shouting if she lives in this wild and woolly country long," said Jack meaningly.

"Why didn't you shoot when the cowboys grabbed you?" demanded Ralph.

"The blamed fools didn't give me a chance," replied Jack sulkily. "If they come fooling around here again, I'll—" Jack stopped abruptly, but the frown upon his face spoke more plainly than words.

"It is a long way to Phoenix," said Mrs. Levins. "How are you to get them here?"

"I will just have to take the team and wagon and go down there across lots. That is the only way that I know."

"Are there any roads?" demanded Mrs. Levins.

"Probably," was the reply. "I can find out by asking enough questions.

"I am afraid that you will get lost," said Mrs. Levins. "We can't very well get along without you."

"If I do, I'll just have to find myself again," was the cheerful response, "One thing, if I do get lost, it won't be the first time.

"How long will you be gone?" queried Ralph anxiously "can I go with you?"

"I don't know how long I shall be gone. Two weeks maybe. You must stay here and help take care of the family while I am gone. They may have alot of stuff that they wish to keep and there may be load enough for the team without you."

Jack was carrying potatoes to a pit near the tent and did not see ~~the~~ his father drive up to the tent upon his return from Phoenix.

"Patience guide me!"

What a great beast!" said a strange voice near him as he passed around the corner of the tent. Glancing quickly up, he beheld the team and loaded wagon, his father, a rather good-looking girl and a very stout elderly lady. The woman's eyes were fixed upon him in a stare of evident amazement and disapproval and he quickly realized that the remark which he had heard was for his own benefit. For a moment he was speechless, then setting the sack of potatoes down with a thump, he exclaimed cordially: "Why yes, that is me, of course. I had forgotten that we had ever been introduced, but hope that you will pardon my forgetter. Welcome, Mrs. Berry, to Eden's blooming dusty bowers. This, I presume, is your charming daughter," he continued blandly, indicating the girl with a wave of his hand. "She don't seem to resemble you much, but there is no telling what will happen in time. Welcome, Mrs Berry.

Welcome, Miss Berry. Just make yourselves at home. I am the bigbug around here when father isn't at home, and I haven't given up my job yet."

"You be no gentleman. No sir; you have not," declared Mrs. Berry very emphatically.

"Oh well, I have known that for a long time," said Jack deprecatingly. "It wouldn't do to be that kind of a thing-a-ma-jig in these parts. I would dry up and go to heaven in no time."

"I do like the society of a lady though," he continued meekly.

"Patience guide me! 'Ow the beast do ~~talk~~ gab! Is that your son for sure?" demanded Mrs. Berry of Mrs. Simms in a doubting tone.

"Of course. He is a pretty good boy, too. Even if he does act a little queer once in a while. Come Jack, take the horses and turn them

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into the corral. I meant to have introduced you people, but you got ahead of me," continued Mr. Levins.

Mrs. Berry turned abruptly and waddled to the tent shaking her head in a forceful manner, but the girl, Annie, glanced curiously at Jack as he unhitched the horses and led them away.

Tall and well-formed, she was as striking a person as a girl as Jack was as a boy ~~verging~~ nearing manhood's estate.

"My, but she is a bird," Jack assured himself as he turned the horses loose in the corral.

And we will guess as to whom he meant,

"No babe about that

fellow," said the girl to herself as she sat in one corner of the tent after preliminary introductions, and glanced curiously about her. "I am sure that I shall like him, if he will only act sensible. I hope that mother won't be to hard on him," she continued, not for a moment dreaming that will power and male domination with the aid of subtile intonation of voice, is often more than a match for vinegary speech.

"Hif Hi were a man, I would show people a thing or two," Mrs. Berry was saying as Jack entered the tent after the choring had been finished. "Hit should 'ave been the hother way around an~~d~~' the woman 'ave hall how the size an' strength," she concluded in an injured tone of voice.

"Why, Mrs. Berry," remarked Mr. Lewis. I have seen many a man smaller and apparently weaker than you are."

"So 'ave I," admitted Mrs. Berry. "An' Hi 'ave seen many the one wat was bigger an' stronger an' wasn't worth 'is salt. Now, there his that young helephant how yours: Hi dare say 'e hisn't much good."

"Yes I am," declared Jack with lamb-like innocence. "I can scare a jack-rabbit pretty nearly to death, I can let a skunk do me up fine, I can play in the mud out in the irigating ditches, I can let the cowboys tie me up for a maverick, I can hunt three days to catch a sixty pound deer, I can kiss a pretty girl, if she will let me, I can"—

"Patience guide me", fairly screamed Mrs. Berry. "Hi never dreamed that you 'ad a fool for a son."

"Yes, I can do all of those things," began Jack again. "I know that I can because I have done 'em. And I can do more than those. What great things can you do?" he asked as eagerly and as matter-of-fact as if in real earnest.

"Pooh", snorted Mrs. Berry. "Wat a 'eaven this 'ud be, hif there were no men harround.

"I don't know where 'eaven is," declared Jack with a distressed look.

"Hand you'll never find hit," declared Mr. Berry.

"But if you wish to get away from the man kind," he continued, ignoring the interruption, "there is a nice little nook down toward the corner. Being so bright and so enterprising, you could soon build yourself a nice little mansion and I faithfully promise you that I wouldn't come nearer than nine hundred and fifteen feet, unless you asked me to do so," and then Jack paused as if in pained embarrassment and looked out of the corner of his eye at the daughter to see how she took the conversation between her mother and himself. The girl seemed to be much surprised and rather mystified. To herself she was saying: "What ails that fellow?"

"Jack is a good boy," declared the easy-going Mr. Levins secretly pleased ~~th~~ that his son had undertaken the task of subduing Mrs. Berry. Mr. Levins understood his son but the rest were at a loss to understand his tactics.

Mrs. Berry, angered and rather discomfited, changed the subject by demanding abruptly: "W'at 'ave you to heat in this country, hanything?

"Lots of things, lots of

things," declared Jack quickly. "Most of the time we eat about the same things as other white folks—bread and butter, milk, eggs, potatoes, garden stuff, cottontails, jacks, and—if we should get real hard up, we might get a few prairie dogs, or skunks, or a coyote, or a lizard," he continued earnestly with unmoved countenance, but deep enjoyment of the look of unspeakable horror that showed upon Mrs. Berry's face.

"Patience guide me", murmured Mrs. Berry in shocked consternation. "Hi will never heat *such* stuff."

"You won't have to if you move down to that nice little nook that I was telling you about," declared Jack with a bright smile and the kindest tone of voice imaginable.

"'E do beat hall," declared Mrs. Berry with a shake of the head. "Hi,— Her farther speech was silenced by three reports of a sixshooter in quick succession just outside of the tent. Jack's eyebrows met in a forbidding frown as he jerked his sixshooter from his belt and peered out through a slit in the tent

"Patience guide me," exclaimed Mrs. Berry in alarm, "Wat *fool* did *that*?"

Jack returned the sixshooter to its sheath and with a welcoming smile stepped outside.

"Hello, Mr. Borden," he

said in greeting. "I am very glad to see you, but you had better not knock so loud next time. We have a nice old lady here that is very apt to tell you what you are if you get to fractious. Come in, come in. We are all at home and as lively as sand-stampers could be expected to be."

"How are you, everybody," was Mr. Borden's greeting in a hearty tone of voice as he entered the tent. Mrs. Berry frowned ominously as she glanced at the wild-west outfit of the new-comer.

"Wat's 'e got hall them flumadiddles for?" she demanded crossly, meaning the sombrero, six shooter, chaps and cartridge belt.

"To keep the crows from pecking his eyes out," explained Jack seriously, noting Jim Borden's look of surprise. "This is our friend, Mr. Borden, Mrs. Berry. And this, Mr. Borden, is Mrs. Berry's daughter Annie. Mrs. Berry is trying to civilize us, but she is having rather uphill work of it," he continued with an expressive sigh.

"Same kind of an old gabber as ever," remarked the Holbrook man with a grin. "He is a bad egg, Mrs. Berry. Better not waste your time on him. I have brought him up with a short turn once or twice, but it had about as much effect as throwing water on a ~~duck~~

duck's back."

"'E do be a fool," remarked Mrs. Berry. "An' Levins," 'e do be a smart man, too. He can't see 'ow 'is son his so."

"I'll tell you what," said the Holbrook man slily, "you just sit down on him once or twice real hard and I'd bet a new sombrero that he won't get fresh very soon again. Jack looked really frightened and forgot to say anything before a strange voice, ingratiating, wheedling, and ~~propitiary~~ propitiating drew the attention of those in the tent

"How do you do, people? May we enter?" In the doorway of the tent stood a small man with a shaggy, grizzled beard.

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Directly behind him stood another man, smooth-shaven and well-groomed, but possibly older than the speaker.

"certainly," said Mr. Levins cordially. "Have a chair," he continued, bringing forward two home-made chairs.

The strangers seated themselves and without speaking, glanced about from one to the other of the inmates of the tent with evident interest and an evident lack of good breeding.

Jack turned his back to the strangers, rolled his eyes wildly, and winked his left eye spasmodically at Ralph.

"~~What~~ "Wat bloomin' 'eathens," remarked Mrs. Berry in

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disgust.

"Where from"? queried Mr. Borden genially, to relieve the suspense.

"Back that-a-way", replied the little man with the beard, jerking his head backwards in a rather uncertain direction." My name is Smith and this is my friend, Mr. Larson. We were going by here and thought that we would stop in and get acquainted.

Nice place you have here. Fine crops, fine water, nice buildings. Things in good shape. I like to see things look prosperous. By the way," he continued in an ingratiating tone of voice," which of you gentlemen is Mr. Levins"?

"I am," admitted

that individual, wondering vaguely how the man who was trying so hard to be polite and agreeable could know that a "Mr. Levin" was present.

"Ah, I see, ~~I see~~ I see," said Mr. Smith, rubbing his hands to-gether in a gleeful manner. "And this," indicating Mrs. Berry, "must be Mrs. Levin." Jumping up, he tried to shake hands with that lady but she repulsed him angrily.

"Go hoff," she said shortly. "Hif you want to gat to hanybody jist try hit hon that Jack hover there. 'E his the fellow you be lookin' for."

"No harm intended, lady. I am jist making a friendly call."

"She is just the one to call," declared Jack stoutly, assuming as idiotic an expression as he could. "She has no string tied to her. You can have her if you can pack her off. I wouldn't say a word against it."

"If you really wanted her to go," said the Holbrook man politely, "you would impose different conditions. It is quite evident to me that you would shed bitter tears if she were to depart." And then Jack relapsed into ~~bitter~~ thoughtful silence.

The strangers looked surprised and began to talk about the weather.

"Yes," said Jack

innocently, "We have a spell of weather here most any time we take a notion to talk about it.

Last time I was down on earth, it rained more in a week there than it can rain in a year here. I can't see how it happens that way either, unless it is because there are so many Mormons in this country."

"I can't see how the Mormons hurt the country," said Mr. Smith evidently annoyed.

"I tole yer so," declared Jack as he jerked the chair from ~~to~~ under Mr. Borden and caused that person to sit down upon the ground with considerable force.

"Why did you do that?" demanded the Holbrook man resentfully.

"Just trying to entertain the crowd," declared Jack assuming an idiotic expression. "Mrs. Berry likes a little excitement now and then".

"E do be a beast," for sure," declared Mrs. Berry with a sigh.

Mr. Smith stared at Jack in doubting perplexity for a few seconds and then said: "Mr. Larson, we should be on our way." Arising, the strangers shook hands cordially. Mr. Smith, however, dodged Jack, but that worthy jumped up and rushed after him exclaiming, in a deeply injured tone of voice: "Here, here, my dear friend; you forgot me!"

Mr. Smith put out his hand reluctantly and Jack seized it in his great paw and gave it such a squeeze that the little man groaned in pain.

"Did I hurt you!" exclaimed Jack solicitously. "I am not used to handling such little folks as you. Mrs. Berry is my kind. Next time you happen to feel lonesome, just call around and we will do the best that we can for you. We will have a whole show if you will take the monkey part," he continued earnestly. "Mr. Borden will be the clown."

"Never mind that boy of mine," said Mr. Levins apologetically. "He is neither fool nor lunatic although he tries to act the parts of both at times. Come again. We will be glad to see you." "Good by."

R "Did you ever see those men before," asked the Holbrook man.

"No," was the reply, "and I can't imagine where they came from."

"They act like they had an ax to grind," said Ralph. "I wonder if they are politicians."

"If they have an ax to grind, I hope that it isn't a very big one," remarked Jack with an expressive grimace.

"I'll bet a tin nickle that they are Mormon elders out looking for big game. If they are, they had better keep away from here, or I'll make them think of Jim's rocky bowers buzzing busily 'beyant' the sky, as the paddy 'ud speak it.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Mrs. Berry. "You want a arf dozen yourself."

"Of course, of course," agreed Jack pleasantly. "But what is troubling me is this: These young girls look very fresh and sweet but I would like to know how they will look and act about thirty years hence, and I don't know how to find out those things.

"Look hat their mothers" said Mrs. Berry with an emphatic nod of her head.

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"Will Annie look like you thirty years from now," demanded Jack.

"You bloomin' idjut," exclaimed Mrs. Berry indignantly.

"I thought that there was something the matter," said Jack softly.

XV.

A Thrill of By-gone Ages and The Mesa's Frown.

"What is the matter with Peggy?" said Mamie at milking time one evening soon after the visit of the strangers. "She is all bloody and there is a big cut all along her side."

"I am sure that I don't know," replied Ralph as he gazed at the wound. "Jack, oh Jack," he called.

"Hello," shouted Jack in reply. "Anybody killing you?"

"No, come see what is the matter with Peggy."

"That," said Jack indignantly," as he viewed the wound," was made by a bullet, and a big one, too. I would like to know how it happened."

"Indians, maybe," suggested Ralph.

"Maybes aren't flying just now," mumbled Jack.

"Perhaps that bad man, the claimjumper did it," remarked Mamie thoughtfully.

"I'd like to jump him," said Jack vengefully. I didn't hear a gun to-day; and it has been pretty still, too. Which way did the cows go to-day?"

"They were down toward the canon," said Ralph. "I saw them there two or three times."

"It would be

just like that sneak to get on the other side of the canon where he would be pretty safe and shoot across," remarked Jack. "We must keep our eyes open after this."

Two days later, Dan, the best of the team of horses, limped up to the corral with a bullet hole through the fleshy part of his right fore leg and a yearling heifer did not come home with the rest of the cattle in the evening.

"This will not do," declared Mr. Sevins. "We must watch the stock and find out how this kind of business is done and who is to blame. The stock went down toward the canon, so there must be the danger point. I'll watch them after this when they wander that way."

"Better let me do that," said Jack. "I can see better and farther than you and can shoot straighter."

"No; I am older than you, and having had more experience, may be able to do more. Besides, you might get hurt, and you deserve many years of life yet. I am commander here, my son," he continued, noting a look of objection on his son face.

"Very well," said Jack. "You will have to watch out or that sneak will get you before you know that he is around."

"You believe that the claimjumper is doing this, do you?" asked Mr. Lewis soberly.

"I am sure of it," was Jack's answer. "I would like to get a crack at him just for luck."

The very next day the cattle wandered off in the direction of the canon. Mr. Lewis took the rifle, and by a detour, screening himself behind some cedars, followed closely behind. Creeping down a little draw, he hid himself in a slight depression and waited, closely scanning the region on the farther side of the canon. The hours passed tediously to the watcher;

cramped as he was, and he finally concluded that nothing would happen that day.

"My, but this is Tiresome," he said to himself, "No use in doubling up here any longer. The cows have started for home."

Arising, he stood leaning on the gun and gazed about at the different objects. The cabin, tent, yards and other objects looked natural from this point of vantage. A painful twitch in his left leg and he fell sprawling in the depression that had sheltered him and the report of a rifle smote the silence of the wilderness.

Jack, watching anxiously, saw his father fall and heard the faint report of a rifle.

Drawing his sixshooter, he went racing madly down to where his father lay. The assassin saw Jack coming, and true to his past conduct, left his place of concealment and fled back into the cedars. Jack, catching sight of the fleeing figure as he tore along like an enraged bull, exclaimed: "The sneaking cur! If I only had hold of him".

"Where did it strike you?" asked Jack anxiously as he reached his father's side, but did not need an ~~answer~~ answer, catching sight of blood streaming from a wound in the thigh. J Quickly making a ~~tourni~~ Tourniquet with a handkerchief, Jack thrust the sixshooter into its sheath, picked up the elder man, slung him on his back, then stooping, picked up the rifle, and strode swiftly off in the direction of the tent. "Nothing like being an elephant," he mumbled resignedly. Mr. Levins, understanding, smiled feebly and patted his son's arm affectionately.

Consternation reigned in the tent when Jack unexpectedly entered with his burden. Gloom and anguish seemed to engulf everything and the scurrying clouds that portended the November rains only added to the forbidding aspect of things. The bullet had only grazed the thigh bone and as a result there was only a very bad flesh wound with which to strive.

Mrs. Berry, contrary to expectations, proved an excellent nurse, and relieved the family of much of the night watching that was done for the first few days. The four children took turns at sentinel duty and some one was watching night and day to guard against another surprise, but two weeks passed without interference and Mr. Levin's wound was healing nicely.

"How gloomy things look out-of-doors," sighed Mamie.

"That mesa over there is simply forbidding. It has a frown worse than sometimes shows on Ralph's face when he is feeling out-of-sorts."

"You hall look like you wanted to fight," declared Mrs. Berry. "Jack there looks sour enough to bite a ten penny nail in~~to~~ two." Jack had stopped teasing her with his sly remarks and she had begun to take revenge for past scores.

"I wouldn't care if father were well," said Ralph. "But everything, even the desert and the weather, seem to frown at us now. There must be a torrent of water in the canon now after that rain in the mountains."

"No danger of there being torrent enough to wash us away. Say Ralph, where are those cows?"

"They started out

toward the mesa about an hour ago."

Jack stepped to the door of the tent and glanced about. At first he did not see the cattle, but soon discovered them far down toward the canon. Was it a ~~throphetic~~ prophetic thrill or only a nervous throb that smote his being?

"They are going down toward the canon," he said with a stern calmness that almost frightened those present. Jack deliberately took the rifle from its corner, looked carefully to see how many cartridges were in the magazine, and if there were one in the barrel, then stepped outside, his face set in a tense, unnatural way.

"Do be careful, Jack," Mrs. Irvin called after him.

"I'll be that, sure," was the reply in an even expressionless tone of voice.

Once outside, he started off at right angles to the direction in which lay the canon, walking slowly and in an aimless manner until screened from the view of any one who might be down by the canon, by a belt of ~~cedar~~ cedars that grew at the foot of the mesa, then he stepped along briskly. Near the canon the cedars gave place to an open space perhaps a hundred feet in width that lay alongside the canon.

When near the open space Jack dropped to his hands and knees and crept stealthily up behind a clump of cedars and lay tiger-like beneath and behind their sheltering boughs and peered cautiously out and scanned the farther bank of the canon. Jack slipped the muzzle of the gun forward in front of him and patiently waited. The place where he had seen the claim jumper lay directly before him and only a short rifle shot away. He eagerly scanned every rock, tree and bush, but no stir betrayed life of any kind. Not even a magpie enlivened the scene with its parti-colored coat. Slowly the minutes passed to the watcher in his cramped position and he was growing drowsy when the report of a rifle awakened him from his lethargy.

Peering eagerly forth,

he beheld a ring of powder smoke floating away from behind a walnut tree that stood farther up the canon but within easy range of Jack's gun. Behind the tree, but plainly visible, stood the claimjumper.

"Now you shall ~~fe~~ know how it feels to get shot through the leg," muttered Jack vindictively.

Aiming quickly and carefully, he fired. A faint scream was borne to his ears, and with a frightened start, Jack beheld the man tumble headlong to the ground, and kicking in agony, roll over and over down a steep declivity and plunge over the brink of the canon and downward into the seething flood of alkali-tainted water far below.

An uncontrolable panic seized upon Jack. Letting go of the gun, he leaped to his feet and fled in blind haste until he emerged into the open where the cattle had been pasturing. Visions of sheriffs and judges flashed before his mind's eye and he did not regain control of himself until he beheld Peggy lying dead with a bullet hole in her forehead.

"Pooh!" he muttered, weakly wiping the perspiration from his face with his sleeve. "Just have sense enough to keep your blab to yourself and no one will ever know. Just go home now and go to work until you get over being nervous."

Returning to the spot where he had lain in ambush, he picked up the rifle and strode away in the direction from whence he had come. Strive as he might, he could not calm himself. His heart beat furiously. Perspiration oozed out all over his body and he felt as though he must undertake some herculean task to keep himself from running away.

"I'll do it," he muttered. "If I break my neck, the sheriff can't break it for me. Placing the rifle in a nook at the base of the butte, he clambered swiftly upward, surmounting difficult places that at any other time would have appalled him. At last he stood upon the topmost point. With a harsh, bellowing, defiant laugh, he flung his arms above his head and leaped high in the air. A liquid gathered on the end of his nose and dropped to the rock on which he was standing, He drew his hand across the end of his nose and then looked at it in astonishment. It was smeared with blood.

"More bloodshed," he muttered and again gave voice to a hollow, bellowing laugh. He glanced about him. Far away in the southwest, the sun was sinking from view. Its last rays weakly smote the barren mesa and some how, it seemed to Jack, the forbidding frown was gone and a peace and quiet and a freedom from strife that did not accord with his own feelings, hovered about and over all. Below him lay the ranch in panoramic view and it seemed to him as though he could jump down upon the Big Pine. A longing to try seized upon him and only his reasoning sense held him back.

The shadows of night began to envelope the landscape and with a sigh he began the descent, vaguely wondering how he had managed to scale the steep places that he had encountered while climbing upward.

XVI.

Zion and Her Lures

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Larson called again about a month after their first visit and made themselves so agreeably charming that they quite won the esteem of all the family but Jack. He had not so far recovered his usual spirits as to be inclined to play pranks on any one.

"Your big son is improving fast," remarked Mrs. Smith to Mrs. Lewis confidentially when no one was within hearing. "Did anything serious happen to him?"

"Oh no, of course not," was the assurance but like a flash came a remembrance of many little signs and he gasped in alarm and opened his eyes and stared about him ~~in alarm~~.

"Did your leg hurt you?" asked Mr. Smith solicitously, noting the evident distress of the invalid.

"Only a momentary shock," declared Mr. Lewis evasively. "I am all right now." The visitor noticed the pallor of the father's face and wondered thereat.

"I wonder if the bad man will ever come back," remarked Jennie with troubled countenance.

"I think *not*," was Jack's quiet remark, but the father noticed the tone and the emphasis unconsciously given to "not."

"Where did you put that hoe?" asked Ralph of Jack a few minutes later. "Jack, oh Jack! I say, wake up and quit your thinking so hard or you will wear your thinker out."

"Hoe? Oh yes. It is out by the gate.

"Did you meet him the day that he killed Peggy?" asked Mr. Levin in a low tone of voice when the others had left the tent.

"Yes," admitted Jack with downcast eyes. "He was across the canon, I shot him through the leg and he tumbled into the flood below."

"I am sorry, very sorry, my boy. Just say nothing to any one about it. Cheer up. Forget it. Force yourself to be your old self. Play as many pranks as you please on any one. This life is a struggle and he was the aggressor repeatedly. Now chase yourself out and get busy doing the things that I have told you.

You had better put some finishing touches on the cabin so that it will be better for the women folks".

"Here come those men again", declared Ralph as he burst into the cabin with a rush about a month later. I wonder what they are after anyway. Seems like they can't have much business of their own to be monkeying around here so much."

"I just believe that they are coming to see Mrs. Berry," said Jack with a grin.

"I wouldn't suppose that they would both come to see her," said Jennie doubtingly.

"It would take at least both of them to be a match for her," declared Jack. "She would pulverize me if I were no larger than Mr. Smith. As it is, she has no use for me on "hearth", in 'ell' or in 'eaven'.

"I'll play a good old-fashioned joke on her one of these days that will make her shed bitter tears of humiliation. See if I don't. I've got it all planned out, and Annie is to help."

"You must have

a grudge against her," said Mrs. Levins reprovingly.

"Not at all, not at all," was the hearty disclaimer.

"She is quite entertaining and she does me no harm by calling names and scolding. I am rather inclined to look upon her as an angel in disguise.

Say Mamie, have you plenty of stuff for dinner? Ralph says that your *old* beaux are coming."

"Who-o!" stammered Mamie in astonishment.

"Jack's keen hearing caught the sound of footsteps outside and he did not answer aloud but motioned with eyes and head toward the approaching men.

There was a knock and Mamie

opened the door and stood stupidly gazing in open-mouthed wonder at the new comers. She did not recover her self possession until Mr. Smith seized her by the hand and inquired about her health.

"I am alive," she declared. Then she realized what she had said, blushed, stammered painfully and fled in confusion.

"Mamie has just had an he-lectric shock," declared Jack with mock solemnity. "She will be all right soon — the next time you see her. It is queer how tender a young girl is. It is different with a man. Take me, for instance, I can stand 'most anything and am thankful for small favors, especially kicks — the smaller the bet-

W. How are you coming these days?"

"Fine, fine," declared Mr. Larson.

"I am afraid that we are up against a bad thing this trip," said Mr. Smith in a whisper to his companion. "If we could only tie that beast up somewhere, I think that we could manage the rest of the crowd."

"Mrs. Berry says that 'whispering in company is lying,'" remarked Jack gravely.

"Mrs. Berry is a fine woman, a fine woman," was Mr. Smith's quick retort.

"I thought that you would say that," was Jack's smiling remark. "I have seen for a long time that you were favorably inclined one to the other."

"Dinner is now ready in the tent," announced Mrs. Levins. "All of you come."

"Most awful glad to hear about dinner," declared Jack in a satisfied manner. "Nothing pleases me more, unless it is the same remark about supper."

"I don't wonder that he grew to be so large," remarked Mr. Larson to Mr. Smith in an aside.

¶ "Neither do I," said Jack cordially. "The only thing that surprises me is that I am not full seven feet instead of six feet five and a half. What is the matter with you, Mr. Smith, that you are such a little runt? Did a half dozen women begin chasing you up hill before you get your growth"?

"Never mind about women," said Mr. Smith testily. "They are all right, in their place."

"And I guess that they believe that their place is any place that they may fancy," said Jack with a forlorn sigh.

The elders, for such they were, glanced about over the table approvingly.

"May I ask a blessing?" suddenly asked Mr. Smith in his blandest tones. "I and my friend here are used to saying grace and this is such a fine meal that it almost seems like sacrilege to ~~ng~~ neglect giving thanks therefor."

"That's wat I say," chimed in Mrs. Berry. "Levin 'ere, 'e do be a reg'lar 'eathen."

"What is that," gasped Jack in evident surprise, but no one paid any attention to him.

"If you wish," said Mr. Levine politely.

Then Mr. Smith launched forth in an effort that lasted for several minutes, during which Jack collapsed in his chair and feigned unconsciousness from which he did not arouse until Ralph punched him repeatedly and demanded, "What is the matter with you anyway"!

Whereupon the senseless one roused up and declared: "Starved to death while waiting."

The elders

had come for business, however, and were not to be squelched by Jack's pranks. As soon as the meal was over, they began to talk to Mrs. Berry, as the most susceptible person present, and expound religious doctrines as they saw them.

"Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," asked Mr. Smith

"Hof course Hi do," declared Mrs. Berry.

"So do we", announced Mr. Larson.

"Do you believe in the imperishibility of the soul, a saving through repentance and a home in heaven for the faithful?" asked Mr Smith, volubly warming to the subject.

"O'course Hi do," declared Mrs. Berry. Do you take me for a 'eathen? Hi knew them things 'fore Hi heaver saw you.

"Of course you did," hastily declared Mr. Larson. "You are a very wise woman and no doubt firmly grounded in the Plan of Salvation. We are glad that we have met you. There is a great company when but two or three of the faithful gather in His name.

"Amen," said Mrs. Smith.

"You never talk sweet to me," grumbled Jack in apparent resentment.

"We must be going," announced Mr. Smith. "If you have no objections, Mr. Levins, we will look your ranch over this afternoon.

"It has pleased us very much, what we have seen of it, and we think that perhaps we might obtain a few ideas about different things that would be of benefit to us".

"Of course, of course", said Mr. Levins cordially.

The elders passed the entire afternoon roaming about the ranch.

"They got some kind of a bug in their bonnets", mumbled Ralph, who had kept sly watch upon the movements of the pair. Both strolled up as unconcerned as though they "belonged" as Ralph expressed it, just before supper time.

"We have a few important matters which we would like to bring to your attention", announced Mr. Smith," so felt called upon to return.

"All right," said Mr. Levins politely.

"Have you no religion? Are you a member of no church?" asked Mr. Smith of Mr. Levins soon after supper.

"O no," admitted Mr. Levins. "I never got that far along yet."

"Don't you think that it is about time," demanded Mr. Smith rather pointedly.

"I am willing to take my just dues when done with this life, without kick or excuse.

"We are here for a time only and have a right to expect a better life in the Hereafter, for we are sons of God."

"I hardly make claim to that distinction," said Mr. Lewis modestly.

"Just read Luke iii, 38," said Mr. Larson warmly.

"Then read Ecc ii, 7," put in Mr. Smith. "It is as one of our songs beautifully expresses it. Let me sing it to you," and without waiting he began in a not unpleasant voice:

"O my Father, thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place!
When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold Thy face?
In Thy holy habitation
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood
Was I nurtured near Thy side?

For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast placed me here on earth,
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth,
Yet ofttimes a secret something
Whispered 'You're a stranger here,'
And I felt that I had wandered
From a more exalted sphere."

"Pretty good, pretty good," declared Jack approvingly. "I didn't know that you could do so well."

Mr. Smith, however, did not seem very much pleased at the praise given by Jack. The elders warmed to their task, and acquitted themselves in a very creditable manner, if judged from Latter Day Saint standards. Mrs. Berry woke up also and seemed to think herself at a regular old-fashioned, earnest Methodist glorifification, rather to the annoyance of the elders. Jack glanced at the hook in the ceiling of the cabin, then at a pile of short pieces of raw-hide rope, made from Peggy's hide, and grinned as vacantly as a real idiot.

Elder Larson, rather silenced by Mrs. Berry's hallelujahs, began on Mamie, who was seated in one corner of the cabin, and began to expatiate upon the advantages and pleasures of "Zion" in an earnest manner, meantime bending closely over her. Mamie reddened, stammered in answer~~s~~ and was in a very uncomfortable state of mind when Jack took notice of the state of affairs.

Snatching up a leathern thong, he quickly tied the tied ends

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together and with a bellowing roar that startled the entire company, swooped down upon the hapless elder, jerked him from his feet, made a noose from the now endless thing, slipped it over the elders feet and around his ankles and lifted him bodily exclaiming in the gruffest bass that he could muster: "I'll be hanged if I am going to be the forty second brother-in-law of such a petered-out old galoot as you"! Jack hung his victim upon the game hook, but just at that moment, Elder Smith seized Jack by the foot and attempted to trip him. With a deft movement, Jack flung him upon his back and pounced upon him exclaiming: "It is no use for an old saint that has been chased up hill by fifteen women for the last twenty years to try that trick. My foot is all there".

In a few seconds, Elder Smith was also dangling head downwards from the hook. The family, except Mrs. Berry, looked on in ill-disguised amusement.

Mrs. Berry rushed forward, clasped her arms around Mr. Smith's body, intending to rescue him from his uncomfortable position, but stumbling awkwardly, she threw her great weight upon him, causing him intense pain.

"Ged out, you old fool!" he screamed angrily. "You've pulled me in two." And with a violent shove, he sent her backward with ~~a suddenness and force that was emphatic.~~ such force that she sat down upon the hard puncheon floor with a suddenness and force that was emphatic. Jack laughed impolitely; Mamie tittered, Jennie looked scared, Ralph exclaimed "Oh my!" but the parents looked just as though they had been expecting something of the kind.

"Smith," said Mr. Larson sternly, "did I not tell you before we came here that we could never save the soul of that great imp of satan"?

Mrs. Berry rose stiffly, and in a state of great indignation, stalked to the door. Turning her voice ~~voice~~ trembling with indignation, she said: "Hif that his the kind of religion you got, Hi dont want hany."

"Where there is life there is hope," declared Mrs. Smith.

You want smooth sailing."

"There isn't anything smooth about this," grumbled Mr. Larson.

"Chide not one who has braved the fierce cannibal tribes of the Pacific islands for the dear Lord's sake," exclaimed Mr. Smith.

"Give me cannibals every time," declared Mr. Larson.

"Say Mame," said Jack as if in deadly earnest, "just go and build a good hot fire and we will have roast ~~saunt~~ saint for breakfast. Crossing the room, he took a gleaming hunting knife from its place on a shelf and began to sharpen it on a whetstone.

"Say Smith, you are an old fool," declared Mr. Larson angrily.

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"Yes," admitted Mr. Smith "If I hadn't been, I wouldn't have chosen you for a helper."

"That reminds me," said Jack suddenly, "Father, do you remember when we were down on earth, about those two old tom cats that were always scrapping, that I tied to-gether and hung over a clothes line".

"Yes; you got a licking that time," said Mr. Lewis suggestively.

"That is a fact," admitted Jack. "I was in hopes that you had forgotten that part of the show".

"Jack," said Mrs. ~~Le~~ Lewis quietly. "I think that those men have hung there long enough. They must be getting pretty uncomfortable".

"Maybe, maybe," re-

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marked Jack meditatively. "I guess that they will vamose as soon as they get loose. Will you promise, that you won't run off with them?"

"Of course," said Mrs. Levine rather angrily.

Jack rushed to the cabin-door and shouted as loud as he could: "Mrs. Berry, O I say, your ~~dear~~ dear friends are about to depart. Better pack your clothing and be ready."

Returning, he took the now dizzy elders down from the hook and gently placed them right side up in chairs.

"There," he said solicitously. "I hope that you feel better." The elders remained seated for a few minutes without speaking, then arising, they took their hats from the pegs on which

They were hung and passed out of the cabin.

"Good bye," said Jack politely. "Call again." But the elders made no answer.

"I believe that I had better turn missionary and convert the Mormons," said Jack thoughtfully. "I wonder what would happen should I meet ~~x~~ those fellows & a crowd of their friends in the suburbs of Zion.

XVIII.

The Disease my Father Had.

The entire family, excepting Jack and Annie, were seated on the shady side of the cabin one evening in June enjoying the pleasures of the Arizona climate. Jack and Annie had done the milking on this particular evening and were returning to the cabin laden with "cow-juice" as Ralph flippantly termed milk. They were conversing in low tones about the crops, but there was an air of settled understanding and good comradeship quite evident to a close observer. Mrs. Berry, who had what she believed to be a never-dying hatred for the overgrown, good-natured Jack, gasped spasmodically and clasped the palm of her hand to her side in agitation as an idea dawned upon her rather dull mind.

"Annie," she called authoritively. "Come ~~to~~ 'ere."

Annie obeyed immediately although a slight shade of gloom overspread her countenance, and she approached with downcast eyes.

"'As that helephant been trying to make love to you?" demanded the mother in a shocked tone of voice.

The girl raised her head, and looking her mother calmly in the face said: "No, mother, he has not been trying to do so; he has done it and I have no objection."

"An' do you want to marry that great beast?" exclaimed Mrs. Berry scornfully.

"Certainly," admitted the girl. "He is just about my size. I am six feet full measure and he is only six feet five and a half. You certainly wouldn't want me to be so badly cheated as to have to take such a little runt as Mr. Smith, for instance. Jack just suits my notion," she added with a laugh and a glance backward over her shoulder at Jack who stood meditatively chewing a splinter.

"Lo, that Hi should never live to see this day," moaned Mrs. Berry in genuine distress.

"Well, you have", said Jack in as soothing a tone of voice as he could command. "And I hope that you will see many more not a bit worse. The fact is, it would be hard to find finer weather than this or a better crowd than those present"

"Patience guide me! Patience guide me!" moaned Mrs. Berry piteously. "What shall Hi do? What shall Hi do?"

"Just give us your blessing and be happy ever after," suggested Jack genially.

"Never!" declared Mrs. Berry emphatically. "You shall never marry my daughter. So there!" And Jack for a moment looked rather scared.

"Marry!" he finally exclaimed in evident surprise. "Why, we are married, tied up as 104 tight as can be."

"Married!" exclaimed Mrs. Berry hysterically. "Ow did that 'appen?"

"Oh, we just did it ourselves," assured Jack loftily. "No one could do a better job. We can beat priest, preacher or Mormon elder all out, and do it a heap cheaper."

"That his not married," announced Mrs. Berry with decision, "an' you shall not ~~h~~ 'ave my girl."

"But I will have her if I have to wait until you are dead and gone," declared Jack doggedly. "We have our plans all made and I have muscle enough to care for a wife and a mother-in-law too. I was only talking when I gabbed about being married. We have only pledged ourselves. We will go to any kind of an officer or religious person that you may name, if you will only with-draw your objections, even a priest."

"So you won't go to no priest," said Mrs. Berry hotly. "The bloomin' 'eathens have such 'ogs that they want a fortune for doin' such. You shan't 'ave my girl so now."

The girl turned around, walked back and picked up the pails of milk. "Never mind," she said softly. "Mother is a person very violent of speech, and in her likes and dislikes, but she is not a stayer. She will soon give in. She really respects and likes you but cannot forgive you because you pay no attention to her sharp tongue and slyly overreach her when she gets angry."

"I almost wish that a Mormon elder would pack her off," remarked Jack gloomily. "We have been here over six years now and I long for a cabin of my own and a charming wife to cheer me on in this desert country. Father and mother and Jennie and Mamie and Ralph are all right in their way but not one of them ~~can~~ soothes the beast in me ~~and~~ calms my restless nerves as you do. Let us get the youngsters now and take a walk down to the canon by moonlight. It will distract our attention and Nature is ~~is~~ in a lovely mood to-night." The five young people strolled leisurely across the ranch down to the canon and peered into its gloomy depths. There were no forbidding memories for four of the party but Jack lived again in the past. The rifle shot, the scream, the man falling into the canon's depths, the panicky flight, and the climb to the top of the butte, returned with startling distinctness and Jack sighed heavily as he stood staring dumbly at Ursa Minor showing dimly in the Northeast.

Annie heard him ~~and stroked~~ and touched his arm gently. "You really must not mind Luther. She is not nearly so bad as her tongue".

"I was not thinking of that," said Jack thoughtfully, and could have nearly bitten his tongue off the next moment in sheer vexation.

"What worries you"? asked the girl anxiously. Jack made no reply. He feared to tell, yet it seemed that he ought.

"You must tell me," she insisted. "You are my best friend now and I have a right to share your sorrow."

"I would rather not," said Jack. "And yet, I presume that it is my duty to do so."

"Please go on," said the girl as Jack paused and remained silent. "I am sure that I can help you."

"I shot the claim-jumper through the leg to pay him for his meanness the day that ~~he~~ shot Peggy and he fell into the canon. There was a flood at the time and I suppose that he was drowned."

"I always thought that something of the kind happened," said the girl quietly. "I do not blame you at all. Something had to be done to stop his meanness and you were the only one about the ranch able to meet him. Self defense is the first law of nature and he should not have come back so many times."

"I was almost afraid that you would go back on me if you found out," commented Jack.

The girl laughed softly and said: "You great big goose! Let us be going back to the cabin now. We are keeping the youngsters out rather late."

"Youngsters includes you and I," declared Jack laughing happily as a glow of rejoicing swept over him.

"So it don't," declared

Mamie who had just approached. "You are old folks now. There are only three youngsters in the family now."

"I never had any idea that Jack would catch that kind of a disease," said Ralph scornfully. "It must be something new."

"No; it is not," said Jack quickly. "Father had the same old trouble long ago and has hardly recovered yet. The fact is, it is catching and you may yet get a dose yourself. It may go hard with you, too, as you do not look as though you were going to be very large or strong."

"Huh!" growled Ralph scornfully. "It is a wonder that it don't break your neck."

The little clock was striking the hour of eleven as the young people approached the door of the cabin. The light was still burning and a sound of voices came from within.

"What in the world are they staying up for," exclaimed Mamie.

"I do believe that those old Mormons are here again," said Jack in disgust. "It sounds like 'em any-way."

Swinging the door open, the young people filed into the room. Sure enough, Mr. Smith and Mr. Larson were there. They greeted Jack as effusively as though he was the best friend they had ~~at~~ ever expected to have. Jack took their behavior to mean that they had some scheme on hand and that he would need to be extra wide awake.

"What is in the wind now," demanded Jack bluntly.

"I have just sold the ranch to these gentlemen," explained Mr. Levins.

~~106~~ "For how much?" demanded Jack quickly.

"Fifteen hundred dollars," was Mr. Levins' reply.

"For fifteen hundred dollars!" exclaimed Jack talking in a loud, gruff tone of voice, "that is not enough. They will never turn me out-of-doors for any such price as that. Things are in your name, I know, but who has done the work here? Who has made fences and ditches? Who has worked like a fool for the benefit of the whole family? The Mormons paid eleven dollars per acre for the squatter rights to the site of Snowflake and there is tillable land enough here for a whole crow's nest of Mormons.

This ranch is worth twenty five hundred dollars or it is worth nothing."

"We might give a little more than we agreed," admitted Mr. Smith, "but that is a big price."

"Of course you can, and you will," declared Jack in a tone of voice that was nearly deafening. "Father is to good a man to ignore the rights of his family if they object to some one's soft soap."

"Jack is trying to scare them into it," whispered Ralph to Annie.

"He will do it, too," was the guarded reply.

"We will give two

~~We will give~~
thousand dollars," said Mr. Larson "And that is far more than it is worth."

"You will do nothing of the kind," declared Jack dangling a rawhide thong suggestively before the eyes of the Mormons. "It is two thousand five hundred dollars or no sale. Isn't that so, mother?"

"Two thousand five hundred dollars will do very well," said Mrs. Lewis. "I told your father that he was getting skinned again."

"I won't move out of here for one penny less," said Jack vehemently. "I don't like to move anyway."

"You are a pretty hard case and are getting worse all of the time," declared Mr. Smith crossly.

"Of course; no doubt

of it at all," said Jack and then he gave a bellowing whoop that almost made the clock give an extra tick. "If I keep on for a little while longer, I will be almost ready for a Mountain Meadow massacre", he continued in a threatening manner.

Mr. Smith looked at Mr. Larson in alarm and Mr. Larson gazed at Mr. Smith in stupid vacancy.

"Shall we"? questioned Mr. Smith.

"Anything. Anything to get rid of *that thing*," declared Mr. Larson in disgust. "A person's life is not safe around him."

"It *is* a good thing that you found that out," said Jack with a ferocious frown.

"W'at is to become of me?" demanded Mrs. Berry.

"Oh, you go with the ranch as one of the fixtures", said Jack with ~~one~~ a bland smile.

"No Hi don't," said Mrs. Berry firmly. "An' Hi don't go wit' you neither."

"I can't understand how you will manage then," said Jack with assumed severity. "Have you got that money?" demanded Jack of the Mormons.

"The money will be on hand as soon as the deed is signed," declared Mr. Smith with considerable warmth.

"And will you haul the crowd with their bedding and clothing and other personal effects down to Holbrook," demanded Jack. "Everything else goes with the ranch at the price."

"Yes: and say good riddance to bad rubbish when we see the last of you," declared Mr. Larson heatedly.

"I thought that you would," agreed Jack amibly.

"So it is out of house and home again," said Mr. Lewis with a sigh the next morning after the [illegible] had gone. "I don't like to move. I almost wish that I had not sold. We were getting enough to feed and clothe us and we might do worse. Where shall we go?"

"See here what I found in one of those dailys that the postmaster gave me," said Mamie.

"Read it," directed Mr.

Levins.

"Howell county farms," read Mamie. "Two to twenty dollars per acre. Good fruit land. Good pasture land, ~~Goo~~ Good wheat land, Fine timber. We can please you. Don't waste your life trying to pay for a farm in Iowa or Illinois. Be lively or the snaps will all be taken.

— — Land co.

"Why did we come clear out here," demanded Mrs. Levins.

"Didn't know any better," declared Jack.

"Maybe we will know more when we get there," suggested Ralph.

"There must be something wrong," said Mamie thoughtfully.

"Perhaps there is

a swarm of niggers," suggested Annie.

"I'll nigger 'em, if they don't watch out," growled Jack. "No old coon can monkey 'wid dis chile'."

The trip to Howell co., Missouri was rather tame. Jack and Ralph forgot to spar with each other or to tease the others. Possibly living in the solitude of the Arizona wilderness had made them a little bashful and they shrunk from showing off before strangers.

Springfield, Missouri proved to be quite a town, but the Ozark region soon appeared at its worst and looked so inviting and sterile after the fertile plains of Eastern Kansas that the spirits, of the home-seekers, sank to zero point. Most of the country seemed to be timbered.

Many scraggy orchards, usually apple or peach; could be seen, The ~~soil~~ soil was the worst feature, however. There was but little of it, What there was usually overlaid a mass of gravel and flint. By the time they reached Mountain View; things looked less uninviting and it was evident that a more productive country was reached. The travelers left the cars at West Plains, a considerable town, but were greatly puzzled to understand what had made the town.

168. The land agents were all polite attention and volunteered to show the "snaps" free of charge. Mr. and Mrs. Living went the first day and returned toward evening tired and disheartened.

"Say mister," said

Jack to one of the land agents," I am the bigbug of the crowd and I want to see too. If you will just give me a team and rig and written directions as to where to find some of those fine farms, I won't bother you any farther."

The rig, a small hack with one seat, was forthcoming and Jack and Annie in the seat ready to start when an unexpected hail startled them.

"'Ere, you young uns. "Hif my gal goes, Hi go."

"Well," exclaimed Jack in surprise. "I haven't any objection, but I never thought of you wanting to go. We will have to find a seat though to put in behind. This seat isn't strong enough for I, and Annie and you, too."

"This 'ere will do," declared Mrs. Berry bringing a rocker with a big cushion from the hotel. Jack politely assisted her into the hack.

"Look out or that thing will rock backward and dump you out," was his parting injunction as he clambered into the seat.

The day was nearly spent searching for "maps"

"I wish that I could find something really good to say about this country," said Jack soberly.

"There is a fine assortment of gravel, rock and flint," declared Annie with a smile. "There is lots of brush and plenty of dilapitated buildings and split shingles to beat our own outfit that was sold

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to the Governor."

"Those are not good things in my eye," said Jack quietly.

"Let us get out here and have our lunch in the shade and buy, borrow, beg or steal some of those fine blackberries that look so tempting over in that patch."

"Take all you want and welcome," was the owner's cordial invitation when spoken to about the berries. And the tri did take all that they wanted, and got something that they did not want also.

They roamed about, picked berries, and sat upon an inviting grass slightly resembling clover (sometimes called Japanese clover) until toward evening, little dreaming that the most malignant and annoying

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denizens of the Ozarks lurked thickly about them ready to Missourize the unsuspecting new-comer.

On the way back to West Plains, Jack drove into a small pond beside the road to water the horses, as ~~is~~ was customary in that locality as shown by the well-beaten track that lay through the pond of water. Depressions, resembling craters, some of them but a few feet across and others many rods, are quite numerous in the Ozark country. The soil forms a bottom nearly or quite impervious to water and water stands in many of them the year around. Some of the larger ponds are stocked with fish. Jack allowed the team to drink their fill and started to drive out. One of the horses stumbled and gave such a violent lurch forward that Mrs. Berry, rocker and all, was precipitated over the hind end of the hack.

The rocker went in a direction of its own and Mrs. Berry landed in a sitting posture in the middle of the pond. Her heels, as heels are apt to do, rose to the surface. She kept her head from going under water by ~~throwing~~ placing her hands behind her and bracing her arms to keep from falling backward.

"Elp, elp," she screamed frantically.

"Keep still," said Jack to Annie in a low, warning voice, "she is in no danger."

"Haven't you a

nice soft seat!" asked Jack calmly.

"'Elp me hout, you big fool," commanded Mrs. Berry in righteous wrath.

"I will," said Jack earnestly, "if you will allow me to marry your daughter."

"'Elp me hout, you bloomin' hidjut," screamed Mrs. Berry.

"I am afraid that I will get my feet wet and die young," said Jack coolly. "But I will risk 'most anything for your sake if you will take me for a son."

"Hi'll get hout myself then," declared Mrs. Berry fiercely.

And get out she did, picked up the rocker, slammed it into the hack with unnecessary force, clambered in herself and said: "There, you big fool! Wat did you gain that time? Go hom."

Jacks went "hom" while Annie laughed merrily. Jack did not recover his usual spirits for the rest of the trip.

The family were seated on the porch of the hotel a few days later discussing the state of affairs and the country. Mrs. Berry evidently had a bad spell of the "blues". Annie appeared to be ill at ease. Jack was decidedly gloomy. Mrs. Berry arose suddenly and approached Jack and Annie who were seated on a bench and laid a fat hand on the head of each. With tears streaming down her cheeks she said: "Bless you, my dear children. May you live long and 'appy. Marry just as soon as you can and always think kind how your poor 'old mother."

"What is the matter?" demanded Jack stupidly.

"I 'ave not long to live," was the ~~moun~~ mournful response. "Hi ham a doomed woman. A few short days on hearth for me at best."

"Is that so," said Jack in genuine surprise while Annie stared at her mother in bewildered alarm. "I thought that you were good for forty years yet," he continued. "What is the matter with you?"

"I 'ave the smallpox," declared Mrs. Berry, a fresh supply of tears coursing down her cheeks.

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"The smallpox," exclaimed Jack in alarm. "Maybe that is what is the matter with me."

"Jack and Mrs. Berry have the smallpox," cried Jennie shrilly.

The hotelkeeper, overhearing, tiptoed out on to the porch cautiously.

"Who has the smallpox?" he asked in an awed tone of voice hardly above a whisper.

"I got something," declared Jack recklessly. "Do you want some? You can have all I got if you will only take 'em."

"Where are the symptoms?" asked the hotelkeeper warily.

"Most all over," said Jack grimly, "but I guess that they are thicker about my ankles than anywhere else."

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"Show me," commanded the Missourian, standing off about fifteen feet.

Jack bared his right ankle. "Looks like measles, sure, to me, but I'll swear that I had the blamed things once. If it is measles," he continued savagely, "then you have a worse kind here than other countries can afford."

The hotelkeeper came closer, squinted carefully, straightened up and laughed loud and long.

Smallpox! Ha ha ha. Measles! Ha ha ha. That is chiggers."

"Chiggers! What are they?" inquired Jack.

"You have found out," declared the hotelkeeper. "They are a mite of a thing that likes to camp in the hide of such kids as you. You'll survive."

"Chiggers are pretty tough, but if that were all, I wouldn't mind it so much. You have body lice here in this hotel," declared Jack in an injured tone of voice.

"Body lice," exclaimed the hotelkeeper in amazement. "If there are any body lice here, they came with you. How do you know?"

"I felt them crawling all over me in the night and couldn't sleep half of the time", said Jack in angry discontent.

"Show me", commanded the Missourian heatedly.

Jack lifted his pants leg from

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about his neck and began to search its creases. "*See*." he exclaimed in triumph as he disclosed to view a black object that leaped ~~nibly~~ nimbly away.

"Pooh! said the Missourian. "You big fool! That is a flee. You people must be from the wilds of the Sahara desert," he added as he walked into the hotel.

"I wouldn't mind a few bears, or tigers, or elephants," remarked Jack with a return to his old habit of exageration, "but when a multitude of little devils that I don't know are around until they get in their dirty work, begin to bore for oil in my prescious skin, I am ready to run." And fleas! Ugh! I am going to *vamose* this country right away. I'll look for a home where such things are not found."

"You will have to take ~~me~~ me along to keep you from being taken in," said Annie.

"Of course I will. We must get tied up first thing by the proper magnate. Most anyone can take me in," said Jack slyly as an afterthought. "Even a green young girl."

"That green young girl that took you in will throw you out if you don't be careful," declared Annie menacingly.

"No, no no," said Jack, heartily. "I am mighty glad that I got taken in. It is a sweet bondage."

"Hif Hi 'ad only known," said Mrs. Berry with a sigh.